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The man from Tarsus

THE MAN FROM TARSUS

OTHER BOOKS
By
LAWRENCE O. LINEBERGER

TOWERING FIGURES AMONG
THE PROPHETS

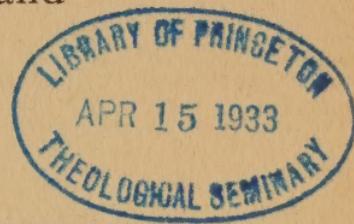
CARDINAL CHARACTERS OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT

THE MAN FROM TARSUS

His World, Personality and
Religious Genius

By
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*Dedicated
to
MY CHILDREN
in the hope that they may
the easier find in Paul
aids to the abundant life.*

“. . . Paul, who is second in importance only to Jesus and without whose genius the Galilæan might never have conquered the western world.”

—JOHN MACY.

FOREWORD

IT is the fashion nowadays to roundly apologize for a new book on Paul; it seems so unnecessary. Why add to the already endless list about the great apostle?

But why offer an apology? Is Paul in any likelihood of being exhausted? Must not every age—even each new period—re-discover him for itself?

Take any major field of study (science, for instance): despite the many books on it; has the last word been written in that field? How about art? How about religion? Is it not just as true of great personages?

Have the many books written about the life of Lincoln exhausted or fully interpreted the great Liberator? Nay; they are an evidence, rather, of the inexhaustible character of the subject. And is this not true, even to a greater degree, of Paul? After Jesus, Paul is the world's major religious genius. Not only is he the greatest letter-writer in history (judged by the influence those letters have exerted), but the greatest religionist of all time.

So long, then, as religion shall engage the minds of men, will Paul come in for a full share of men's interest and attention; and so long will books continue to be written about him.

If this one shall add to a better understanding and a warmer appreciation of its celebrated subject, it, thereby, shall have good and sufficient reason for being.

The name-and-subject index appended, it is hoped, will add to the usefulness of the volume.

My thanks are due my friend, D. L. Browning, of Columbus, Ohio, who read the proofs and offered certain suggestions, some of which I have been glad to adopt.

L. O. L.

Buckeye Lake, Ohio.

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PART ONE

I

THE SCOPE OF THE BOOK

I

FROM birth till death he lived in a storm. Action, movement, struggle, the colourful, restless, emphatic assertion of the superb will which was his, and the sublime convictions; these things were basic to his being, spelt life to him. Every choice he made, every cause he espoused, everything he did was instinct with life. This was Paul of Tarsus.

Paul of Tarsus.—That is one of the few names time has been powerless to dim. Rather time and distance have lent enchantment to the name, and have served to bring in a just appraisal of the man. It has taken the ages to do it. But no name is more securely fixed in history's Hall of Fame than this.

Paul is the Olympian of the infant Church, and the spirit of the great apostle blows through the history of the Church from its beginning to the present like a great wind. His literary remains mark him out as the first great thinker and teacher of classical Christianity, a true-born king of men.

In the keenness of his intellect he was the peer of Alexander. In the refinement of his manners he was the equal of Lancelot. As a leader of men he rivalled Napoleon and Cæsar; and his influence upon the centuries has been greater than all these put together. Unequalled as a moulding force in history; unique as a link between Jesus of Galilee and the universal Christ, he was the first man in the world to see in Jesus the cosmic Saviour.

Paul's was the most creative mind in the early Church. James Moffatt calls him the early Church's first man of letters. Says Dean Inge, "It is impossible to guess what would have become of Christianity if he had never lived," and suggests that his missionary journeys and printed writings have largely determined the history of Europe and America for two thousand years, if not for all time. He was the ablest of all the apostles—an evangelist, an organizer, and a great thinker all in one—by no means a common combination. The best students of Paul have not hesitated to rank him with Plato, Augustine, Luther, Spinoza, and Pascal; and it is safe to say that Paul suffers nothing but rather gains by comparison with these. He is the peer of all the soaring human peaks that make up the company of great Christians. He bestrode his age, the first age of the Church, like a colossus.

Paul knew himself to be superior to all other Christian apostles; knew that he had a better insight into the meaning and mission of the Church than they; knew, finally, that his achievements surpassed any and all of theirs together. He could say: "In nothing was I behind the very chiefest apostles."¹ In the nearly two hundred fifty verses in his second letter to the Corinthians the personal pronoun appears about three hundred times, or more than once to every verse. The capital "I" might be said to be the text of this epistle. The apostle writes emphatically and unblushingly about himself, what he knows himself to be and what he can do. Like everyone who has impressed his personality on history, he knew very well that he was a better man than any who sought to discredit him in the eyes of the world, and he did not hesitate to say so. Though modest and humble of heart, he was confident of his qualifications as an apostle of God, and so asserted it.

"Who is sufficient for these things?" "I am," answers Paul. He faced a task sufficient to crush the courage of any

¹ I Cor. 15:10.

man, yet he was sure of his power to accomplish it. Not that he felt sufficient of himself, for he hastened to say "our sufficiency is of God." But he had confidence in himself. It is the only state of mind in which a man can ever do any great work. He knew that in all the Church he had no equal for the clarity of his vision and the extent of his accomplishment. Yet he felt no pride, was not given to self-assertion. If he "laboured more abundantly than they all," it was not he so much as the grace of God which was with him.

Paul was the incarnation of enterprise. He had the imperial outlook. He dreamed of a kingdom, world-wide and eternal. Though his plans far outran realization, yet he achieved amazingly. And the secret of his astonishing career lies in the courage of his soul and the completeness of his consecration to Christ. From the moment of his conversion to the day of his death he saw no abatement—only enrichment—of his devotion to Christ. History knows no one who surpassed him in the utter abandonment of his life to one great purpose. To know his life is to feel the titanic force and truth of his words, "This one thing I do." The sainthood of Paul is proof of the Saviourhood of Jesus.

He was a man of high heart. He believed in men, loved them, and they knew it, and responded in love and loyalty to him. He had the faculty of Jesus for looking through the sordidness of men around him and for seeing their potential and innate possibilities for spiritual greatness. Everywhere he went people in all walks of life quitted what they were doing and attached themselves to him. Young men, women, slaves, Jews and Gentiles forsook their ancient faith, suffered civil and religious persecution, faced social ostracism to share in the hardships of his life. Men like Titus of Antioch, whom Paul had taken once to Jerusalem as a sample of the Gentile Christian work that was being done in that second capital of Christianity, and Timothy of Lystra. These with others such as Sospater, Aristarchus,

Secundus, Tychicus, Trophimus, and others were important persons in the entourage of Paul. Luke, a Greek proselyte from a Philippian family, seems to have joined Paul on the occasion of his first sickness at Pisidian Antioch. From that time onward this great-hearted physician travelled with the apostle, looking after his wretched health. Some of these acted as Paul's secretaries and deserve to be numbered among the world's unsung heroes. With Paul, love was not a profession, but a passion, and his great heart bound a multitude of hearts to him in inseparable fidelity.

II

It is surprising that of the hundreds of books written around Paul, treating almost every phase of his life, that no one of them has taken, it would seem, as its exclusive task, the setting forth of the character, personality, and in particular, the *inwardness* of the man; his creativeness as a thinker and his genius for religion.

We have had many *lives* of Paul and a steady flow of able and useful commentaries on his words. His theology, his Christology, his missionary travels, his significance for doctrine, for logic, for Christian education, and even his ethics, have been treated time and again. And these have been of great interest and profit. Any study of Paul is amply rewarding. But in giving ourselves to these, have we not lost sight all too much of the *man*? So it seems to the author.

Our supreme need is to *know* Christ, and not simply to know about Him—to know the Christ of Christian faith. And our chief means for knowing Christ—I had almost said our only means—is to know Paul. But what of the Gospels? For our understanding of the Jesus of history we do go to the Gospels. But for Christ in the richness of His spiritual fulness, we must look to Paul. None other speaks so well the language of Christ. None expounds so well the Christian faith; and none speaks of divine things in such a human fashion. He has been called, not with-

out reason, the humanizer of the supernatural and the spiritualizer of the human.

The one aim of this book is to acquaint the reader with Paul. There are books on Paul with Paul left out. This aims to reveal Him, and if successful in revealing Paul, it cannot but reveal Christ even more.

Any study of Paul, to have permanent value, must prompt men to plumb again the infinite depths within. The point of view throughout the volume is, in the main, psychological, rather than theological. Any true study of Paul must be based on psychology rather than on logic or theology, yet it need not veer from historical verity, as this nowhere does. There is more than just a knowledge of the facts involved in the understanding of any great personality; and, in trying by the inward means of sympathy and insight to understand this first mighty athlete of the Church, one does not thereby cease to be the historian true to all the known facts. Our study does not aim to be a pretty panegyric on the great apostle, and not so much the story of a life as a history, in part, of a *soul*.

That we of the West are Christian at all is due to Paul; and to him more than to any one else must be given the credit for the expansion and perpetuation of the Christian faith. He was the maker of the vocabulary of the religion of the spirit. He was the apostle of freedom in his day, and modern Christianity, if it is to adjust itself wisely to the new needs and knowledge of our new age, must be actuated by the spirituality which was native to Paul.

It is not unimportant for us to know Paul's time; we must know him, if at all, as a man of his time; but our need is not to know Paul's time so much as to know Paul himself; to know Paul as Christ made him—a man for *all* times.

It is fortunate indeed that we may know Paul; in fact, no great figure of the ancient world can be so well known as he. One of the greatest men in the history of religion in the world, how fortunate for us to be able to know him

so fully! Because of his letters, Paul can be better known than Jesus; for he is in his letters and speaks through them still.

We possess, in the Book of Acts, a history of Paul written by a reliable historian and friend of the apostle's; very interesting it is, and revealing, but in it we have Paul at second hand. His personality escapes us. But this we do not realize until we turn to his letters, where we have him at first hand and in the varied richness of his personality. Paul's letters were not written for canonical uses, but because he could not be present to talk to those to whom he wrote; they are his "absent" sermons, but are none the less Paul present and speaking. They are personal and unrestrained outpourings of the apostle's heart to those he knew and loved and who knew and loved him. They are full of the self of the man, rich in the sayings and deeds of a colourful life, written in the artlessness of a true simplicity. They are nothing so much as confessions inspired by emergency situations, each letter being a portrait of the apostle of unique value.

We must rediscover Paul through his letters, yet we can understand the letters only as we understand Paul. Detached from their environment of time and thought, Paul's letters are misunderstood, which, in turn, leads to the misunderstanding of the man. In his letters Paul is a hurrying river of expression, sweeping on in ever-enlarging stream. In them the man Paul, with all his strength and weakness, is pictured with masterful clarity and vehemence by his own hand. Said the philosopher John Locke of Paul's writings, "I do not say that he is everywhere clear in his expression to us now, but I do say that he is everywhere a coherent, pertinent writer." In these writings we have the lavish outpourings of a vigorous mind and a sensitive heart. To the church which gave him most trouble he cries, "O Corinthians, I am keeping nothing back from you, I am telling you all. . . . Open your hearts wide to me." His letters have rightly been called "the Magna Charta of Christian cosmopolitanism."

politanism." The keynote of Galatians is liberty, that of the Corinthians spirituality. The writer's aim, in the first place, was to rescue the new faith from Jewish asphyxiation and to set it free in the world; in the next, he would strip it of formalism, making its authority purely one of the spirit. F. G. Peabody sees in Paul's letters several phases of his spiritual development: Paul the Emancipator, Paul the Conciliator, Paul the Spiritualizer, Paul the Mystic, and lastly, Paul the Counsellor.²

To know the state of the Church as it was in Paul's day we need but study First Corinthians. To know the apostle's ideal for the Church we study Ephesians; and to know the Church's greatest apostle, Paul himself, better than he can be known anywhere else, we study Second Corinthians. This is Paul's *apologia pro vita sua*. It is the most intensely personal of all his writings. He had been slandered by certain "assassins of character;" his assailants said he did not look, live, or preach like an apostle. He was no apostle. He had never seen Christ in the flesh. In his reply Paul makes bare his soul. He is in a hurry, is swayed by powerful emotions. This is the most disorderly of all his writings. He is full of anxiety and righteous wrath. We first see his eyes flash with indignation, then flush with tears. First sorrow, then love rushes over him. He is now tearful and tender, now tactless and tart. He first lifts his head in truest dignity, then bows it again in deepest humility. It is a character study of the apostle.

III

As said above, Paul was a man of his time speaking the language of his time; but great men are no less great because they are men of their time. The spiritual Paul, the man in the richness of his soul and personality, is what we cannot afford to miss. Paul, embodying Christ, will make us free. We are free on his own principle from every sort of bondage,

² *The Apostle Paul and the Modern World*, p. 124. The Macmillan Company. Used by permission.

free from the letter of even Paul himself. Some things there are in Paul which we will let go, have let go, as being inapplicable to us of today, since Paul was a man of his time, and that time one of the far past. But Paul the man, Paul the religious genius, Paul the Christian, we cannot lose without losing much of Christ, and in losing Christ, we lose ourselves.

Many have moved away from Paul because they believe he moved away from Jesus. But is it not obvious that the road back to Jesus lies through Paul? Light on Paul is light on Jesus. The way to know Jesus better is to know Paul better. For a knowledge of Jesus, Paul is our most valuable source. Then let us *know* Paul!

A good way to end in making Christ less than He is, is to begin by ignoring or belittling Paul. But the truth is, that in the light of all the facts, Paul cannot be successfully belittled, since it is to him that we owe our Christianity. It was he who had the spiritual discernment to see in the newborn religion the promise of universal spiritual empire, if freed from the hampering carcass of Judaism; and it was he who had the moral courage to undertake the task of setting it free. His courage never failed him. Fear he often knew, but he had no dread of a difficult task. His whole career from his conversion to his martyrdom is proof of this. The incident at Lystra during the first missionary journey is characteristic of his whole ministry. Here Paul was stoned, dragged out of the city, and left for dead. But consciousness returned, he rose to his feet. And soon strength also returned. But did he run away? Not at all; on the contrary, he again "entered into the city." And not long after this Paul, in company with Barnabas, returned to Lystra!

There is a little hero in the soul of each of us. It behooves us to keep that hero alive. So long as we keep on intimate terms with Paul, the heroic in us cannot die. His life "in Christ" is the best stimulant of the Christ-life in us. In surveying the interior dimensions of his

life, we shall effectively minister to our own "inner and eternal Me."

He who would interpret Paul aright is faced with a task just short of the insuperable. It is not impossible to know Paul's age quite well, or to know one's own age, both of which are essential; the former in order to understand Paul even a little, the latter in order to make him understood by others. Moreover, there is no use trying to interpret Paul until the interpreter can rise above one-sided and wooden concepts and can feel first-hand something of the breadth, depth, and height, something of the inward grandeur of the man and his experience made radiant "in Christ."

Christ's significance for man lies in the fresh, unique experience of God which He brings; that of Paul in the vitalizing experience of Christ which he has and can impart to others. Just as the life and love of God broke through Christ to men, so did the life and love of Christ break through Paul. God meant to Christ what He had never meant to another. And Christ meant to Paul what He has not meant, and probably never will mean, to another man. Just as Shakespeare made poetry mean more than it ever had before, so Paul made—yea, *was himself*—the supreme exposition of Christ to the world. In Paul, Christ has His best interpreter.

IV

But who will interpret Paul?

It may seem a presumptuous thing to propose to write *understandingly* of a man so great as Paul, and especially one so much and so well written about as he. To propose to write a history of religion is to profess to have a spirit specifically qualified for religion. To propose to give a transcript of the mind of Paul presupposes a mind and heart fitted to do the task. Hence the seeming presumption.

The task, then, is a biographical one; and there is one thing it seems to me that biography certainly ought to do—to paint the clear portrait of the man, to trace the outer

ministry, above all to state the inner meaning, and to show, by flashes, from his conversation and career, what sort of man he was. Any biography is a lamentable and unreal business if the biographer has no special potentiality of his own, no unique idiosyncrasy for the task in hand. In that case nothing unique or genuine comes into being.

A passionate sympathy with all things Pauline and a mind soaked for years in the essential spirit of the man make up the chief qualifications which the writer claims to have for hoping to achieve to any degree in the undertaking. As to whether success shall crown the effort, the reader must be the judge. At all events, I desire not a history of the apostle, and not so much a commentary on his writings, though the autobiographical portions of these shall be much at our service. I shall try, by the use of historical imagination, to reconstruct the living person of Paul and the living past in which he moved, but shall not depart from the way marked out by accurate and reliable scholarship.

But all true biography is a means of expression; expression, that is, of the deeps of the writer and of the reader as well as of the one written about. One must refashion Paul, if at all, in his own image, so to speak. To be a true interpreter of Paul, one must feel as Paul felt; he must be able—somehow—to make the reader see and feel as Paul saw and felt. It is the biographer's business to discover the hidden rhythm and the mysterious music that lie locked in the secret places of the life of his subject, and release them.

Philip Guedalla, that gifted portrayer of character in England, has characterized biography as "a region bounded on the north by history, on the south by fiction, on the east by obituary, and on the west by tedium"—not an unjust characterization of much of the older biography. But the new is more alluring, because it aims to be more than a recital of events and dates. It must be these, but it must be more. It must be a graceful narrative of a racy and unburdened sort. Above all, it must be the faithful history

of a spirit. It is not the business of genuine biography to "stiffen eminent people into an impossible goodness." The newer type of biography which of late has come to be called "psychography," is a dramatic form of character portraiture. It seeks to use facts in such a way as to make each fact do its full share of interpreting the character of the person treated. It aims at a scientific grasp of motivation. To measure up, it must give us a picture of the character of the man as determined by his times and as determining in turn the events of his day. The biographer who knows his art must proscribe the method of detailed inventory as the most primitive of all ways of conveying any correct impression of any person. The truest impression of a person is not gained in this way; it is more accurately and subtly produced by such things as the tone of the soul as it is heard in the conversation or reflected in the written record of one's words.

Therefore, in this book, I am more concerned with what Paul *was* than with what he did, though not for a moment underrating the latter. His unparalleled achievements cannot be minimized, even if one desired to do so. But throughout truth shall be the one aim; mere facts shall come in for small regard; for too often facts are anything but interesting and sometimes smell exceedingly of death. The book will not be all that the fact-hunting reader might wish. But it is hoped that those who seek essential truth regarding this Promethean spirit of the early Church shall not be disappointed; for in the appraisal of a great personality psychological probabilities may contain more of truth than so-called "logical certainties."

Yet—fictionized biography, so much the vogue nowadays, is far from my purpose here; although the purely academic approach cannot serve the purpose either—that method is the best that can be devised for missing the meaning of the *real* Paul. If the play of imagination has been subpoenaed to aid in the portrayal of the apostle—which is here admitted—none the less has historical accuracy been strictly

maintained. But in the depiction of any notable personage there is probably no such thing as "truth purged of all passion." One must strive to tell the truth, but how shall one divorce himself entirely from every dear prejudice in favour of his hero, even if this were desirable? What we must have in biography, says Andre Maurois, is "truthful transmission of personality;" but to be interesting as well as accurate, continues this authority, it must be also an "artistic transference of reality."

v

I would write of the man in his spiritual genius and of the human Paul; of Paul the Jew who in the days of the Cæsars, to borrow a word from Deissmann, "breathed the air of the Mediterranean and ate the bread which he had earned by the labour of his own hands; the missionary whose dark shadow fell on the glittering marble pavement of the great city in the blinding glare of noon;" of the tent-maker of Tarsus, God's ambassador to the peoples; travelling Anatolian, Roman citizen from the banks of the Cydnus; of the man, the saint, the mystic, the Christian *par excellence*.

From out the far past, as said above, none can be so fully known as Paul, and none is so well worth knowing. He can be known because he has unconsciously embedded his heart-life in the letters which he wrote. And this is so because his letters are *letters* and not so much treatises on theology or dogmatics. For letters, as Deissmann has ably pointed out, are the least artificial and the most self-revealing of all forms of writing. These letters of Paul, addressed to private individuals, never intended for publication, with never a thought of getting into the canon of sacred Scripture, with no inkling of the immortality they were to attain, embody the "life blood of a noble spirit."

It cannot be too strongly maintained that Paul's writings, in the main, are letters—personal letters addressed to per-

sons; private and unliterary, not intended for the public eye. They are not so much epistles, that is, formal treatises on given subjects. There is a distinction between letters and epistles. Deissmann has said³ that there is the same difference between a letter and a literary epistle that there is between life and art. The letter is a reflection of life, the epistle is a piece of conscious art. All of Paul's writings, even those in which he deals with doctrine, theology, and Christology, are letters, confidential, private, personal; never intended for posterity or the public, not even the Christian public of his day, but for private groups of Christians. Such letters reveal and reproduce the personality of the writer as no other kind of literary output can. Thus it is we have in his letters many roads into the soul of the great apostle, some of them narrow and dark, but others that are wide and well-illumined.

The New Testament writings, especially Paul's letters, have unusual worth and enduring values due to the fact that they were written in the "unstilted language of the people." They have the bluntness and simplicity of the "colloquial wild-growing Greek" of the common masses, rather than the flowery style of the aristocratic literary class. In general the New Testament is in the Greek *Koine* of the Mediterranean Basin. The best guarantee for the persistence of these writings was in the fact that they were produced in the living speech of the people. It was imperative that the Gospel clothe itself in the simplest garment of the people's language. In this it could travel to the ends of the earth, wandering from coast to coast whither the tribes of simple men went.

Of these writings most every part was popular, simple, concise, clear, plastic, and never trivial—penned in a style that was full of "noble simplicity and calm greatness." The masses needed Gospel light, they craved the simple; and the divine revelation, in order to reach them, must don a

³ *The New Testament in the Light of Research*, p. 29. Ray Long and Richard R. Smith, Inc. Used by permission.

plain garb. While there are here and there in Paul's letters some things, as Peter said, "hard to be understood" (Moffatt translates "letters containing some knotty points"),⁴ yet the vast majority of his writings possess a pithiness and punch the like of which is nowhere to be found save in the periods of Jesus. Paul knows how to accommodate himself to few words. He uses short sentences, and packs great truths into the shortest space thinkable. Even in his highest reaches of thought, such as the Christological passages in Colossians and Philippians, he does not soar far above the heads of simple folk.

The purpose, then, of this book, is to study the man Paul, silhouetted against the background of his age and viewed in the light of his times, since in no other way can we get at the *real* Paul. There is no need for another *life* of Paul, for there is no lack of books which tell all that is historically known of him. The facts of his life so far as known are fully recorded, but his *experience* is an exhaustless mine, not fully explored by any, and yielding rich treasures to any who will faithfully dig for them. His is one of the magical names of history; magical, because it makes an indescribable stir in the mind; because it provokes excited responses and kindles the sense of wonder. It is the purpose, therefore, to probe that vast kingdom of spiritual inwardness which has made this name tower so titanically in the history of things spiritual.

VI

It is easy, looking down time-softened vistas, to see the poetry and perfection of a great soul; but Paul's life was neither all poetry nor perfection. I shall strive to depict him, if in sympathetic vein—as how else could one depict him with truth and reality?—yet none the less honestly. I shall not dwell so much upon the super elements in Paul, though not for one moment would I discount or suppress

⁴ II Pet. 3:16.

them; I would limn his portrait in its simple humanness to me. I would set him forth as a most intensely human figure; I would catch the meaning of Paul for us of today; I would not study him apart from *his* own time; but I would paint a portrait in harmony with *our* time.

By the above, I do not mean that this is to be an effort to refurbish the figure of Paul to make it more modern in the sense that Jesus has been refurbished and made to look like a successful business executive of modern industrial America. For that matter, Paul has never been other than modern. Distance from us has brought him substantial veneration. I would not diminish aught of such veneration; it is deserved. Halo-snatching is small business and far from my design. To take the well-earned crowns off the heads of the heroes of the race is a form of violence comparable to grave-robbing in Egypt.

Neither would I put meanings into the life of Paul which are not there. This would be to imply that a great saviour of the race has grown out of date. It would be to fail to recognize his essential timelessness. All great men of the past, even more than great books of the past, are strangely contemporary; they need but to be expounded in the thought-forms of another time to be fully understood and exercise their ancient powers over us.

Paul has taken his place in that significant group of history's Promethean souls who have moved as pioneers of thought and spirit. He was a new type of man; a new and lonely type of religious consciousness; a type of man of whom Christ was the fountain and the first. Till he had been added to the Church, it had been a timid spinster, hiding behind locked doors from the rough usage of a hostile world. But in Paul the Church took on aggressiveness; it moved forth militantly until thrones and emperors were threatened. Princes, fearing the Church, imprisoned and burnt its votaries lest old dear customs should fade and dynasties fall.

The shadow of Paul spreads its huge bulk over the Chris-

tian centuries. His spirit is an undying flame possessing still the rare power to communicate its heat and light. Nineteen hundred years have not diminished his stature, nor will nineteen thousand be likely to do so. But before coming to study Paul intimately, let us look at the world in which he lived and worked.

II

THE WORLD PAUL LIVED IN

I

WE cannot understand the age in which Christianity strode to unparalleled success in the Roman Empire unless we keep in mind one principal fact: that it was a proselyting age, and that Judaism, out of which Christianity arose, was a proselyting faith, and as a proselyting faith, had prepared the way for Christianity. It is only fair to say that Judaism was the first great missionary religion. There is a literature running from the time of the Maccabean revolt down well into the second century A.D., whose sole aim was to interest the Gentile world in Judaism. Antiochus Epiphanes, by a violent effort at forcible Hellenization of the Jews, intensified the Jewish national spirit, thereby giving birth to a counter-conquest of forcible Judaization on the part of the Jews. This was a common method of the Jewish state which for a time pursued this policy of territorial expansion. But when Jewish nationhood was lost, the propaganda was carried on by well-organized methods of peaceful penetration into foreign parts.

Proselytism was Judaism's final defence against Hellenism. It was Judaism's approach to the Gentiles, though made in a mood of self-defence; so that over an extended period, Judaism was spreading among the Gentiles, being promoted by an army of zealous adherents.

Alexander has been called "one of the supreme fertilizing forces of history."¹ It was he who first brought about the unification of civilizations and "the cross-fertilization of cultures." He was the first to give universalism to the

¹ T. R. Glover, *The World of the New Testament*, p. 62.

world's thought—a far-off preparation for Christianity. He opened the way to "a new equality, a new freedom and a new recognition of the universal human." His conquests had given the world a new mood. There was the vast increase of knowledge, the firm establishment of governments, the building of roads. This increased travel and facilitated the rapid spread of religious cults of every sort. It was an age of religious migration, an age of spiritual hunger and experiment—the age of the Mystery Religions: these flowed into the West from the East in the wake of Alexander. There was a restless and pathetic search for religious satisfaction.

One man the master of the earth; that man Alexander! As Angus has said, one supreme ruler on earth opened the way for men to believe in one Supreme Being in the Universe. Men had lived to see the world united under the rule of one man, why should they not believe in the rule of one God? Thus the world was prepared for monotheism and came near to achieving it *then*. If monotheism was not definitely held and taught, "it was trembling on the lips of the best thinkers."

Judaism, finding itself in this world of the new mood, was able to attract many whose religious footing had been lost. It was in such a world that Christianity appeared and swept to a speedy victory.

This was the age of the synagogue; the synagogue was the centre of Jewish local life abroad, it was a creation of the *Diaspora*, having first appeared in the Babylonian exile. Through it, by means of Paul, Christianity first filtered through to the Gentile world. The synagogues were outposts scattered all over the Roman world advertising Judaism, inviting adherence to the Law of Moses and to the worship of the One God. There were many travelling propagandists of Judaism closely corresponding to early Christian missionaries. It was an age of travelling teachers of many kinds, from Stoic philosophers to teachers of Judaism, and finally, preachers of Christianity. Itinerant

teachers were on every road. The preachers of Mystery Religions were in every city.

That the proselyte movement of Judaism had enjoyed wide success, Jesus, and especially the Book of Acts, bear witness. In the words of Jesus addressed to the Pharisees, "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte," we have a graphic picture of the zealous activity of the Jewish proselyting movement. In Luke's picture of the first company to hear the new Gospel preached by the disciples of Jesus, there are "Jews and proselytes" from "every nation under heaven."² Josephus records that at Antioch large numbers of Gentiles had been "brought over" to the worship of the Jews. It was here that the conflict between Judaism and Christianity was first fought out; "the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch." The Epistle of Barnabas, with Antioch as its probable background, is keenly conscious of a considerable movement toward Judaism. If we follow Paul to Pisidian Antioch we see the Gentiles worshipping with the Jews in a Jewish synagogue on strictly Gentile soil. In fact, the apostle's early ministry is full of contacts with devout Gentiles who had become Jews by adopting the Jewish religion either in whole or in part. These partly-informed and partly-persuaded "God-fearers" readily became Christian converts. In them Christianity found a prepared and fertile soil for the Gospel seed. Among such devout ones was Cornelius, a centurion of Cæsarea; Lydia, a silk-seller of Philippi; Justice of Corinth "who worshipped God," and certain "devout Greeks" at Thessalonica, Athens, and other places. The ready appeal which Christianity made to the Gentile heart and its rapid development into a Gentile religion was largely due to the presence all over the empire of a multitude of Gentile proselytes to the Jewish faith.³

Harnack estimates that there were about four and one-

² Acts 2:5, 10.

³ F. M. Derwacter, *Preparing the Way for Paul*, p. 119. The Macmillan Company. Used by permission.

half million Jews in the Roman Empire outside of Palestine in the time of Paul. Remembering the little group that came back from Babylon, this is a remarkable growth; and we are justified in thinking that it had been greatly swollen by the proselyte movement. The success of this movement can be explained on no other than moral grounds.

Men desired, as they always have, a religion that could make them comfortable in the universe. Judaism offered multitudes in quest of religious refuge a spiritual home. To the Graeco-Roman world, with its laxness in morals, it presented its austere and virile morality. To a world of strange, new moods it came with the appeal of a "venerable antiquity." These, with its robust theism, gave Judaism a large following.

It was to be expected that this vigorous personal faith in God as "the Dispenser of the happenings of history," preached by a "grimly earnest people," would make wide inroads into the life of a flaccid paganism. There was a growing demand for a sober, more thinkable religion than temple ceremony or the Mysteries offered. There was no magic in the synagogue. As Glover has reminded us, here was religion in closest association with pure morals and high conduct. To accept Judaism's preaching of one God, all-wise and all-righteous, was "to be set free once and for all from a myriad of half-devil gods," which meant sanity and happiness.

But why, we must ask, did Judaism fail? There were many contributing causes. Among those given by Dermawter⁴ I set down the following: (1) A widespread anti-Judaism which had existed for more than two centuries within the ranks of Judaism itself. (2) Roman wars which had shattered Jewish social status in the ancient world. (3) Restrictive legislation on the part of the Roman government against proselytizing. (4) Its strong emphasis on nationalism. The reappearance of an exclusive nationalistic

⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 10.

spirit in later Judaism was its undoing; for as nationalism grew, effort to win the Gentiles lessened until it ceased altogether. Nationalism was the rock on which the world conquest of Judaism went to pieces. (5) Finally, there was the rise to power of Christianity with its elements of mystery and redemption. Judaism offered the world a set of ethical laws when it needed redemption; when men cried for bread, Judaism could but give a stone. The mystery element in Christianity appealed to the heart of the Gentile world of the first century; it met a spiritual craving which Judaism ignored or could not satisfy.

That it was the proselytes who first heeded the Christian message and entered the Christian ranks, is the verdict of historians. Round every synagogue there was a circle of adherents ready to listen, readier than the Jews; and it was from these that the Christian preacher drew his first converts. Thus was the door to the Gentiles opened. "The proselytes, bag and baggage, went to the Christian Church." It was sunset for the synagogue. In one of the most amazing reactions in history, Judaism, which had so thoroughly prepared the way for Christianity, swung away from Hellenism and the Church "in anger not yet forgotten." Judaism turned toward Asia, while Paul and Christianity entered Europe. Judaism was a nationalistic religion with catholic pretensions; Christianity was catholic by nature; in Paul it had attained universalism and was on the road to becoming a world religion.

According to the authority cited above, the end of Judaism's missionary effort was marked by two facts: "first, the Gentile world found its satisfactions elsewhere; second, Judaism lost her propagandist zeal."⁵ It was sunset for Judaism; its early morning vigour was gone, the twilight of decadence had come. The strictly Jewish genius had said all that it had to say and was not able to renew itself in fresh thought and form. It was sunrise for Christianity.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

II

The six centuries from Alexander to Constantine, historians agree, were the most religious of history. In the first century of our era a world-religious revival began, climaxing in Christianity. The life had long since passed from Greek religion; it stood discredited and powerless to aid. "Man's meddling mind" had dissipated the Olympian faith. As to a hope beyond death, Greek religion was dumb. It might satisfy while life was joyous, but could offer no rod or staff to men entering the Valley of the Shadow. Roman religion had never been spiritual; it was practical, unimaginative, and patriotic, an instrument of the state and discarded when it no longer served state purposes. In his conquering days the Roman placed no great faith in his gods, while his belief in himself reached unlimited bounds. Thus the Roman gained the world and lost his soul.

These centuries, reaching from the conquest of the world by Alexander to the Christian conquest of Rome, saw the greatest changes in history. Never did mankind witness greater social or religious upheavals than in this age. Angus calls them the "intensely religious centuries." The beginning of this period saw the break-up of the city-state system and the rise of individualism. One cannot point to another period in which religion so dominated the thought of men. The dykes of the world were down.

About the middle of the period in question Paul visited Athens, and while preaching in the Areopagus said: "Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are very religious."⁶ There was a pathetic interest in religions promising salvation and security from failure. The crying question of the age was: "What must I do to be saved?" A dread uncertainty dogged the steps of men. The blight of scepticism was widespread, but the desire for immortality was passionate. To any confident gospel, such as Orphism,

⁶ Acts 17:22.

men made ready response. The world was sick of ruinous wars; Rome had just emerged from the bath of blood which the dying Republic and the birth of the Empire brought upon her; men cried for peace. Accordingly when Octavian gave the world peace he was acclaimed as a god. About this time Pliny the Elder speaks of "the boundless majesty of Roman peace." It is a boon, he says, given by the immortal gods to mankind.

It can hardly be said that a world that was making in religion all kinds of experiments was either morally or spiritually dead. On the contrary, truth compels us to say that it was a very live and alert world.

But having said this, the student of this period must also admit its moral obliquity. It was an age grown old, very decadent in morals, and the great world weariness which marked the end of Empire had set in. Pessimism, cynicism, and hopelessness abounded. There had settled over Rome spiritual disquietude, chronic melancholy, boundless sadness.

In another sense, it was an adolescent age, an age full of sudden fires and sullen tempers, replete with harshest cruelties, sunk in inhumanity. During his ten-year campaign in Gaul, Cæsar killed a million men, and that with the crude instruments of warfare which they then had; he sent another million into slavery. After concluding peace with one nation, he attacked them when they were disarmed, and killed 430,000 of them, men, women and children. In his Spanish campaign he crucified thousands whom he held as prisoners of war. The great Dictator's own murder at the hands of Brutus and Cassius in the senate chambers at Rome still causes a shudder, yet it was but a typical crime of the age. Antony, the successor to Cæsar, put the great Cicero to death for the simple offence of using his sharp tongue against him. The Roman Empire was established by a merciless and rough-shod trampling upon the nations and the murder of their kings. Octavian, the successor of Antony, in order to annex the kingdom of Egypt, ruthlessly

killed or drove to suicide⁷ every member of the ruling dynasty, including the celebrated Cleopatra and her son, Cæsarion by Julius Cæsar. Cæsar, Antony, Octavian, giant builders of the Roman Empire, were all strangely devoid of moral principle.

Look at the pre-Christian world wherever we will, it is much the same—an overcast, sad, despairing consciousness which is heathenism. The light of hope is absent. There is no haven from which it might shine. Morbid and unmoral writing expresses the sordid inner thought of men whose lives are nurtured in uncertainty and too often crowned with futility. In Rome Greek paganism and Oriental sombreness are met and massed. Over all of life there broods the sense of hastening doom. Not until we compare the spirit of our age with that can we appreciate what the Christian spirit has done for the world.

For in the Augustan age, Rome's Golden Age, we see the Empire morally at its best. But this "best" how shocking! The palaces of the Emperor are full of orgies of vice. The Empire groans with the anguish of the poor. Misery and luxury dwell side by side. Ten thousand knights and senators clad in purple, wade in ease and affluence, while millions cry for bread.

And yet what can we expect of a civilization founded on slavery? There were millions of slaves and conquered serfs whose masters esteemed them less than cattle, and accounted them as little more than animated machinery. In the city of Rome, it is said, there were two slaves to every free man. And both master and slave were frequently of the same race; and in some instances, as in the case of Epictetus the Stoic philosopher, the slave was superior in mind and soul to his master. This ugly situation was made worse by loose moral relations between the two classes.

In pre-Christian Rome there was pride but little purity;

⁷ Suicide was practiced by all self-respecting persons of the age when the cause they represented was lost and defeat came. It was a part of their code of honour.

culture in the ruling class but no charity; palaces but no hospitals. It was a world without love, devoid of humanity. Marriage was neglected and laughed at. Honest toil was flouted. The city of Rome was a paradise of paupers. Bread and games (and what inhuman games!) was the universal cry.

The superb law-giver of the world had become its play-boy; and as play-boy Rome was also superb. But Rome was dirty, too. There had crept into the Roman nature some fatal streaks; and some streaks of rust had come into their iron souls to turn them from conquerors to cowards. They had become weak and flabby fools. The once glorious legions thunder less and less until at last they thunder not at all. The battlecry of the hero gives way to the cowardly scream of the crowd for the gladiator's blood. The Roman people has become, indeed, "a beast of muddy brain."

Slavery had vitiated life. There was no improvement in the arts of agriculture: a deadening of invention. The masses are poor. The farmer more and more belongs to the land and not the land to the farmer. All round there is the boundless spiritual loss that slavery always means. Slavery was proving the cage of the soul, cramping all growth. Dr. Glover says the gladiatorial shows were the outcome of slavery. It was abuse of human life, abuse of the captive, in particular. The underestimate of woman amounted to a disease. Suicide was the fashion. The gods were those of the Pantheon and the Emperor deified. But even emperor-worship was soon to decline. This unifying principle by which the Empire had knit itself into one was being undermined by philosophic thought. In the words of Matthew Arnold:

*"On that hard pagan world disgust
And secret loathing fell.
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life a hell."*

James Anthony Froude characterizes this general period

of Rome as being “as corrupt as has been ever known. . . . Marriage, which under the ancient Romans was the most sacred of ties, had become the lightest and loosest. . . . The age was fertile of new religions.” These were the Mystery cults, for Isis, Cybele, Mithra, and others were claiming their votaries and spreading their influence to the limits of the Empire.

III

The age of the Mystery Religions is one of the most interesting and astonishing periods in religious history. These, without exception, were brotherhoods of a low order, but they enshrined the one hope of the Empire; this hope lay in their unparalleled hunger for religious satisfaction. In an age when paralyzing doubt was all but universal; when the best and greatest of Rome; men like Seneca, Cæsar, Cicero, Virgil, Epicurus, Epictetus, and even the good Marcus Arelius, saw little hope of justice here or improvement of life’s sorry state beyond the grave—in such an age the Mysteries sought to give guidance and help.

Pre-eminent among these powerful cults were Orphism, the Egyptian Isis fraternities, and Mithraism. These, and especially the latter, were Christianity’s most virile competitors. Some of these, says Angus, were orgies of blood; others were “dignified sacraments.” In the Mithric rite of baptism the candidate stood in a pit; a bull was slain on a platform above; and the blood ran over him.

These mystic brotherhoods seem to have been the first voluntary associations for religious purposes, outside of Judaism, in the world; and they had existed since the days of Alexander. They were scattered all over the Græco-Roman world. They, with the synagogue, which was just as widespread, furnished, it seems, a model for the Christian house-churches of the early Christians.

It can be said to the credit of the Mysteries that they were quite democratic; they denationalized religion and wiped out social distinctions. They aimed at being uni-

versal; were for all classes. They intensified men's faith in themselves, and brought into the Græco-Roman world an element which was very weak in paganism—a deep sense of sin and the need of redemption. It is believed that they "powerfully supported the tendency toward monotheism." W. D. Niven says: "If monotheism was not definitely taught, it was trembling on the lips of the best thinkers."⁸

Several of these Mystery cults persisted in the Græco-Roman world for a thousand years, more or less, and were paths to salvation sought by inquiring souls. But the Mysteries were destined to go down. That they existed so long is an indication, certainly, of the spiritual poverty of these centuries rather than of the superior qualities of the cults themselves. Unlike Judaism and even Stoicism, the Mysteries had no ethical code. Their fatal weakness lay in the fact that they completely ignored character, placing their trust alone in sacraments.

Græco-Roman religion was an unthought-out morality, and it collapsed, as such a faith always must. But scholars contend that its best points were absorbed by Christianity.

Christianity, of all religions, is "the most congenial to the thought-out life." It was "good news" concerning human destiny. It offered a religious home to mankind. Greek philosophy had given the intelligent a measure of relief. Platonism had enjoyed high vogue; but Platonism, at best, was man seeking God. Christianity was God seeking man. It was a new religion with a new world view. Over all its competitors it possessed the inestimable advantage of having its life centred in the historical person of Jesus Christ. The world waited for a personal redeemer. It wanted a tangible God, having lost interest in the invisible and distant Olympians.

This craving was responsible for the deification by the age of the Cæsars. In answer to the despairing query as voiced by the Stoic Seneca, "Where is he to be found whom

⁸ *The Conflicts of the Early Church*, p. 20.

we have sought so many ages?" the Christians pointed to Palestine and to Jesus.

If, morally speaking, Rome was not a harvest of iniquities ready for the sickle, it was a world ready for a new infusion of religious blood. It was an age in which there was a "failure of nerve." Virgil, the major poet of the time, speaks of "blood and tears in human things," and weeps for a purer age.

The new infusion of blood which Rome so sadly needed came with the rise of Christianity in the Gentile world. This began with the preaching of Paul, who gives every evidence of having expert knowledge of the needs of his time. We cannot centre on any single individual who did so much to cure his sick age as Paul. He has rightly been called "the doctor of nations." In him Christianity had struck its roots deep into the dark power, had experienced the creative anguish, had known the joy of bursting forth into new life. In him it reached down to the Deeps and the Demons and up to the Splendours and the Powers. It was stoutly established in that *anima* in which earth's choicest sons live and have their being. Its vision was earth-deep, heaven-high, and universe-embracing. It knew the fever and the fret of the hungry generations; generations which panted for religious reality amid a bleak and bovine paganism. It was a day in which the law of tooth and fang and claw was supreme in society, but the Church made it its sacred business to extend the reign of mercy and brotherhood introduced into the world by Jesus Christ.

IV

The first three centuries of the Christian era were also religiously chaotic, for it was not until the third century that Christianity won a decisive victory. Stoicism had tried to supply the age's heart-hunger. Bevan says: "The Stoic missionary, preaching the self-sufficiency of virtue in a threadbare cloak at the street corners, had been one of the typical figures of a Greek town many generations before

Paul.”⁹ But these were treatise-mongers and sermon-makers of which the world had plenty, even them. Paul was of a different order.

But Stoicism, like Judaism, was a preparation for Paul and Christianity. It produced some great men of high moral character. But it was a creed of despair. It had no belief in progress. Its outlook on life was dark. It held out no hope of salvation. It was totally lacking in emotional dynamic which Christianity, with its element of mystery and its programme of redemption, supplied.

In Epictetus, the poor lame slave, Stoicism probably flowered at its best. He taught the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. In at least one respect, he was a striking forerunner of Paul—in that he laughed at misfortunes, bore hardships cheerfully, and regarded even death as an incident to be left in the hands of God. Non-Christian ethics reached its highest water mark in the writings of Seneca and Marcus Arelius.

But Stoicism had been powerless to stay the tide of moral degeneration. In the Mystery Religions we hear “the pathetic yearning of the ancient world for regeneration and salvation.” So strong was the thirst for religious certainty that it became the fashion to join as many Mystery cults as one could afford. It was a bewildering age. With the collapse of venerable systems of belief and the decay of the ancient faiths, the masses were filled with despair and longed for social and spiritual security. Like all times of transition, men were being pushed out of the old ruts. There was huge need for fresh thinking, but a huge unwillingness to do so.

The heart of Stoicism was its ethical creed, and the heart of its ethical creed was: “Live in conformity with Nature.” But Paul called men to live in conformity to the will of God as embodied in the person and teaching of Christ. Judaism and Stoicism called men to the way of moral regu-

⁹ *Hellenism and Christianity*, pp. 72-73.

lations; Paul and Christianity called them to the way of grace; and Paul, in setting forth grace as against law with grace as a more excellent way, typifies Christianity's adoption of the winning side in the competition of religions.

That Stoic and Christian ethics were poles apart is seen in many ways, among them these: The Stoic preached self-repression looking toward complete apathy, as the Buddhist preaches self-effacement to achieve extinction! Man was his only help; there was no place for a Saviour; the weak were left to fail.

Upon men's minds the Stoic had fastened the doctrine of the neutrality of nature to human pain. This Paul demolished by the proclamation of his Christian doctrine of God and the universe. "All things work together for good to them that love God." With this mighty stroke of speculation did he Christianize the universe, and lay it down as a claim of the full Christian faith, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is in all things, and over all things.

Before Rome, civilization had flowered in Greece and died. And in such celebrated Romans as Lucretius, Horace, Tacitus, and Juvenal one can sense, as said above, the age's deplorable degeneracy and hear echoes of the world weariness that prevailed. They express despair at the eternal recurrence of what seemed the "perpetual cycle and aimless repetition of identical events." All thoughtful men mourned the fact that there was nothing new. All seemed vanity and a chasing after wind. Said Marcus Arelius, "A man of forty years, possessing the most moderate intelligence, may be said to have seen all that is past and all that is to come; so uniform is the world." Lust and luxury, those fires which eat out men's marrow, had crept over the age. The ether of faith had departed, and with it the assurance of beauty and truth; the ice of chill disillusion plagued men's minds. Men were victims of a blasé cult of world weariness; felt ashamed if caught with an ideal on them.

But hope blooms best in despair; one of their purest

poets said, "There will be another Tiphys¹⁰ to redeem us." Inquired Seneca, "Where will you find him whom for so many centuries we have sought in vain?" Thus the fulness of time had come, and paganism joined Israel in the wish for a Deliverer. It was a questing and questioning age, but it seemed that

*"Always it asketh, asketh
And each answer is a lie."*

V

With the Jew, salvation lay in a rigid keeping of the Law, while with the Mysteries it depended on the execution of certain rites rather than on conduct. In Mithraism, the most popular of the Mystery cults, the saving rite was baptism in the blood of a bull. With Paul, salvation depended upon faith in Christ plus good conduct. The Stoic philosophy, as we have seen, advocated a noble life. It stood for the uprooting of all passions of the flesh. Reason must be in control and dry up the passions. It urged daily self-examination corresponding to that practiced by the early Puritan fathers of New England.

But the Stoic stood aloof in untroubled serenity as on a mountain peak. He lived in the world, but was not of it. He refused to be troubled by the foibles or sufferings of men, either of his own or others. "Piety," said one of them, "is a vice incident to weak minds." The true Stoic refused to become angry, doing his duty for duty's sake. But in this there was no lasting attraction, no sufficient goal. "Comparatively few," says Enslin, "cared to accept the rigorous self-discipline with no goal save doing it because it was right. Weariness in well-doing was the great obstacle. There was no future reward held out to them, nor was there the challenging social call to do it for the sake of one's fellow citizen."¹¹

¹⁰ A prophet revered by many, the counterpart of "Messiah" among the Jews.

¹¹ *The Ethics of Paul*, p. 73. Harper and Brothers. Used by permission.

Stoicism was essentially a religion of despair. Christianity being a religion of hope, a life of joy, found fertile soil in which to grow. It was no great way from the Stoic "conscience," which he claimed Nature gave him as his guide, to the God whom Paul and the Christians exalted as Leader.

I have dealt at some length with the moral character of these stirring centuries in order to show that the world in which Christianity emerged was one whose fixed mental climate was that of despair. This Christianity was unable to quickly alter. Good men looked for relief in another world than this. That this was so, even with the early Christians, the New Testament clearly shows. In the words of Rufus M. Jones, "The shift of focus from this world to the world beyond was well under way in all quarters in the first century. The Jewish Apocalypses reveal the tendency. The widespread Gnostic movements show its sweep and strength. The immense interest in Mystery Religions is part of the same concern, and the absorbing passion for aescetic practices and painful ways of life here below make it very evident that Christianity came into a world that was at heart deeply pessimistic, and that cared above everything else to find a way of escape to the realm of peace and joy yonder—the real fatherland of the soul."¹² At first, nobody expected the Kingdom of God to be *built* here; it was to be *found* there. But the same moral chaos which struck despair into the soul of the thinkers and peasants alike of Rome, furnished Paul with a challenge. Into its depressing moral climate he came preaching that in Jesus Christ the divine "yes" had sounded forth. Men need no longer be content to live in the eclipse of an everlasting "no." Paul met the spiritual aridity with a new touchstone of mystery and hope which he called "my gospel," which was the Gospel of Christ.

Though Christianity's conquest of the pagan world was

¹² *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 131. The Macmillan Company. Used by permission.

slow and painful enough, yet before its hopeful outlook the mad shapes of illusion gradually fled like fog before the out-beaming of the sun. Already the change was noticeable in the lifetime of Paul. Across a stupid and senile age staggering to its death for want of new blood, he left a green belt of new, fresh, fruitful life which spread until the moral fecundity of the Roman world was recreated. Then men took Jesus' way of life, hope sprang up where no hope was.

VI

We must look briefly at Jewish religious life in Palestine; for if in Greece and Rome life had sunk to the plane of moral inaction, in Palestine it had become lifeless and cruelly formal. Vital religion had degenerated into dead formalism. Spiritual bankruptcy quite generally prevailed. There was a certain fierce intolerance toward new interpretations of truth, always characteristic of religion in its decadent forms. Here we see Judaism at its worst; here, too, we are afforded a glimpse of the cleavage between Palestinian and Hellenistic Judaism.

Religion had become sterile, stuffy, and stagnant; but in Jesus and the Christian movement it was to outgrow its old formulations as a child outgrows its early clothes. Religion had become preservative instead of creative, unfit for any daring new sallies on the open road that led out to the far bounds of the spirit world. The Jews held to a *bloc* of theories mistakenly supposing that therein they had life. Religion as a venture had died with them, they had retained only its intellectual formulations; these had grown intractable, had become deterrents of the spirit; they must give way to forms of thought that would remake and guide, for the adventure of spiritual religion must go on. Judaism in Palestine was a river dammed by its own ice.

In such an age God's prophets must sound the "great recall" and point men to the primacy of things spiritual. This Jesus had done, but to His own undoing. Ruling members of His own race who saw in Him grave danger to tradi-

tional Judaism, put an end to His life; but His ideas went marching on, the most seminal and revolutionary ever proclaimed.

The torch of Jesus fell into the hands of Paul who, as the sequel will show, bore it gloriously.

The Jewish High Priest was the most extraordinary figure of this naïve age. He had no character; and little talent that was unusual, save for political trickery, in which art he was the equal of any. He had no policy, but to safeguard his and his party's position of power in office. To this end he stood ready to crush, if he could, any person or cause, who bore it a threat. He was the omnipotent leader of the Jewish rabble. Both the Pharisee and Sadducee parties numbered many noble men in their ranks, but the High Priests of the period were little more than licensed libertines. Strabo as good as says that they were hand and glove with bandits. They were men who had swum up the sewer to power; they dripped of the unspeakable. The High Priest's office was the most splendid prize within the grasp of the high-born of Israel. Over it the Jewish nobles fought like jackals over a bone.

Brigands, robber barons, hard nut-headed men, these priests; men who moved with a deftness and gusto nothing short of the astonishing. They headed an institution eaten out with moral leprosy. In addition to maintaining their office intact, they held it to be their sole mission in life to safeguard, preserve, and transmit the germ-plasm of an established religious order. It was no part of their lot to change.

From the beginning Israel's priestly line had been too much a succession of grasping materialists. The race fostered it. Unlike the prophetic school, it grew and spread more formidable with every generation—this because they were rigidly indigenous, of slow and thick wills, truculent, possessing umbrageous tenacity. They developed a dogmatic positiveness as touching the divineness of their right to rule in all things religious. They evolved an excessively

stout instinct for self-aggrandizement and called it the honouring of God. But always their grand incentive was a tangible one—public honour and private property, two very delicious things.

Having whiffed these as mice whiffed toasted cheese, criminal deeds lost their odiousness provided they contributed to preserving them in their coveted estates. They reeked of patriotism and race prejudice and called it religion; so far had they fallen from the high plane of the prophets. They did not know it, and more's the pity, but they were a rotten tree whose few rusty leaves still clung in withered profusion to its blighted branches. The Jewish religion had grown as grows any healthy tree, self-developing in severe morality, led on by the prospect of better things ahead. But the tree (Paul in Romans thought of it as a tame olive tree) had reached maturity; decay had set in. It was still standing, indeed, but disintegration of the fibres had gone swiftly forward for centuries. Now the stem must be severed from the root if the destroying power was to be arrested and any part of it saved.

So reasoned Paul; and Christianity was the new shoot which, if grafted onto the old stump, would flower into fruitfulness for the larger use of mankind.

This new tree is already big with the swelling bud of promise and rich with the sap of youth.

VII

If it must ever seem marvellous that Christianity, within three centuries, had beaten its rivals out of the field; it is none the less an historical fact. The astounding victory in which the Church superseded the mightiest empire of antiquity may be explained in various ways. There are certain major and minor factors. A few of the minor may be mentioned first, and then the major.

There are such minor factors as: The Greek Bible, which the Church inherited from Judaism; Christianity's intolerance, its preaching of Christ as the exclusive way of salva-

tion; the high ethical code of the early Christians, the purity of their lives which stood in marked contrast to pagan living; the Church's efficient organization operating on impartial patterns, practicing democracy and achieving a unity the like of which the world had not seen before; its minimum of rite and symbolism—Christian simplicity as against pagan complexity. The Mysteries were so many attempts to "galvanize a corpse;" there were so many of them—and all claiming to be absolutely true—that they cancelled one another out.

Certain major reasons for the victory of the Church are: (1) The enthusiasm of the early Christians. That this was one, historians, including Gibbon, are agreed, though the supporters of other religions were equally earnest. (2) Their firm belief in immortality; in an age of hopelessness this inspired hope. (3) Their attitude toward death. This greatly impressed the pagan world; the way in which the Christian martyrs died was something new. The pagan stood in dread of death; the Christian seemed to welcome it. (4) The certainty of Christians that they alone possessed the truth and were right. Pagan religion had no confident gospel. (5) The appeal of Christianity to the common and also the thinking classes. (6) Christianity met the spiritual needs of the age as others could not: it brought a satisfying message to the widespread sorrow of the ancient world. Its Lord of Glory had been the Man of Sorrows. (7) Pagan faiths were based on myths and mythical personages; Christianity was based on historic facts, above all the fact of an historic person, Jesus Christ. This was of supreme and telling importance; ideas, to be powerful, must be incarnated in a person. These Christians were what they were because Christ was what He was. History had searched for patterns by which men might live and die; in Christ it found one. (8) Christianity's victory was due to sheer merit. The deepest secret of this victory is to be found in the spiritual experiences of those who accepted it. It won because of its superiority. The fires of persecution could not

burn it away; the sword of the state could not cleave it away; the sneers of cynics could not laugh it away. Christianity never let men down; it lifts them up.

Small wonder, then, that Greece, "the mother country of the mind," and Rome, the embodiment of law, the living symbol of power, yielded to this strange new *dunamis*.

III

PAUL'S CITY AND EARLY ENVIRONMENT

I

PAUL was born on the borderland between two worlds. He grew to manhood on a great international road connecting East and West. He was a citizen, as he said, "of no mean city," for Tarsus the ancient and the learned was the chief city of Cilicia.

Like Athens, Tarsus was very religious. The white city was studded with temples. It was likewise very industrious. Life centred in the busy markets and on the great marble wharves, past which the clear green river Cydnus runs. The wharves and the markets are the Wall Street of Tarsus. The Jews of Tarsus were of a liberal, progressive sort. They had gained their privileges, it seems, under Antiochus Epiphanes, and their spirit from the heroic Maccabees who opposed him. Paul was both a Tarsan and a Roman citizen. The population of Tarsus is said to have been evenly and harmoniously balanced between Europeans and Asiatics—fitting training-ground for the man whose strange mission would require him to be a citizen of the world!

Not only was Tarsus on the borderland between two worlds, the eastern and the western; it was the bridge between two civilizations, the Greek and the Roman. It was a city-state with powers of self-determination similar to those of Florence and Milan in the Italy of the Middle Ages. In background and traditions it was Oriental; in culture it was markedly Greek. As to government, it was a typical Roman city enjoying a secure and important position in the general order of the Empire.

It was at Tarsus (B.C. 41) that Antony, who became the

ruler of Rome following the death of Cæsar, made his headquarters. To him here came Cleopatra, the picturesque queen of Egypt, to make an alliance. The burly general and the nymph-like queen entertained each other in such magnificent manner as to cause it to be generally believed and freely stated by the people, as though it had been a fact, that in Cleopatra Venus had come down to earth to feast with Dionysus (Antony) for the common delight of Asia.

In Tarsus the three main currents of ancient history met and made the city what it was. These three currents of influence likewise met in the personality of Paul and made him what he was. He was by heredity a Jew, by citizenship a Roman, by culture a Greek. His Hebrew faith was cast in a Hellenic form and nurtured in a Roman environment. To these must be added a fourth and more potent influence—his Christian faith. But he had been subjected to the most rigid Jewish training. His Jewish training dominated the earlier years of his life.

Tarsus had its great schools of philosophy and could boast of many able teachers and scholars among the Stoics. It was one of the three strongholds of Stoicism of the early period.

For two things, then, was the city famous: its maritime commerce and its schools. Since ancient days the ships of Tarshish (*i. e.*, Tarsus) had been renowned. Upon these vessels the rhetoricians travelled far and wide, taking the methods of their *alma mater* all over the known world. Two of the greatest orators Rome ever had, Julius Cæsar and Cato, are said to have studied in the schools of Tarsus. Among its noted teachers were two very great philosophers, Nestor and Athenodorus, the tutors of Augustus and Tiberius. One of the fine sayings of Athenodorus was, "So live with men as if God saw you; so speak with God as if men were listening."

The ethical teaching of Tarsus was not in the hands of the priests, as at Jerusalem, but in the hands of the univer-

sity authorities, and the passion for education and high morals among them was strong. The moral teaching of Nestor and Athenodorus is reflected in the character of Paul. The former was the teaching genius of Tarsus during Paul's youth; the latter died when Paul was a child, but his influence lived on, and was potent in the city beyond the walls of the university where he taught, where it reached Paul, who was certainly never a student in the university.

Paul's later education under Gamaliel in Jerusalem so marked him that, for a time, it swallowed up all his earlier training. Not until after his conversion did these earlier impressions serve him. Paul's religion remained strongly Jewish, but Greek and Eastern thought, Hellenism and Judaism, had been intermingled in him, like a chemical mixture, in the closest union. There is not a page of his writings which does not bristle with his Jewishness, though he is always more than the Jew.

Paul, then, was the product of that broader Judaism of the *Diaspora*; he was the child of a movement that knew how to make peace with the wisdom of Hellas. When he was reborn after the mind of Christ his theology was recast, expanded. It was not a complete break with the past; not nearly so complete as some would have us believe that science, for instance, is now making with religion, which, of course, is mere talk. It would be nearer the truth to compare Paul's break with his religious past with the break which science has made with its past, which is best expressed in one word—progress.

II

The world-wide dispersion of the Jews had its beginning in the destruction of Samaria by Sargon, king of Assyria, in 721 B.C. It was tragically speeded up in 597 when Babylon became supreme, and following the usual cruel policy of expatriation, removed the best specimens of the Jews from their land, among them Ezekiel, who became the great preacher of reform and nationalist leader of the Jews in the

Exile. The severest blow came when, in 586, Nebuchadnezzar utterly destroyed Jerusalem, leaving the temple a smoking heap of ruins and carrying almost the whole population of Judah to Babylon, settling them in an area along the canal Chebar.

Straggling bands of these who in the Exile had kept alive the ideals and faith of Israel returned to the homeland when, in 538, the Persian conqueror, Cyrus, issued his famous decree granting them that privilege. These did something toward the rebuilding of their nation and institutions, but hardly approached their former glory. The new nation achieved its greatest strength in the reign of Herod the Great, who rebuilt and expanded the temple which men like Zerubbabel the governor, Joshua the priest, Nehemiah the viceroy of Artaxerxes I., and Haggai the prophet had erected, bringing it back to something of the glory which it had formerly known under Solomon.

In the years when Jesus was growing into manhood in the hills of Galilee, Judaism reached its most opulent estate. But in spite of all this the wide dispersion of the Jews continued. Many became soldiers in the Roman armies. The lure of commerce carried them into far countries. They were induced by founders of cities to take up residence in many foreign centres. Even before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus of Rome, in 70 A.D., Alexandria in Egypt had become the Jewish capital of the world. Vast numbers of Jews were living in all the great cities of Europe.

Paul of Tarsus was a product of this dispersion. The story of his ministry is full of contacts with the scattered members of his race in the many parts of the Empire he visited. Nor did he quit their synagogues or turn to the Gentiles until his Jewish brethren refused him audience.

It was from one of the most prominent of these Jewish families living abroad that Paul came, a family possessing the coveted prize of Roman citizenship. He could boast a descent of remarkable respectability and piety from the gal-

iant and venerable founders of the Tribe of Benjamin, a tribe that never lacked in courage or loyalty. He was a Pharisee, the class most prominent in the religious life of the latter Judaism. As good Pharisees the family ambition would be to hand down and extend the sacred traditions of the fathers. Paul was intended, educated for that. Doubtless on her one son, a delicate but devout young man, his devoted mother spent her energies happily to this end. Likewise did the father. But here is a son who will not carry on the family and racial ambition.

Had Paul been of the Sadducees he probably would not have owned it with the same degree of pride with which he spoke of his pharisaic descent, for the Sadducees were those who had maintained themselves by a well calculated mixture of force and fraud at the head of the temple government.

It is certain, that while his family belonged to the "strictest sect" of the Pharisees, the Puritans among the Jews, he had freely imbibed the culture and learning which his university city radiated. Says Deissmann, "Paul was a Hellenist, because the tongue and soul of Hellenism came to him with the air of Tarsus."¹ Although it seems unlikely that Paul passed through the Stoic University of Tarsus, since it was a Gentile institution. (We must assume that for this and other reasons he did not.) But that he was greatly influenced by the prevalent Greek learning of his native city is even more certain. This with the training he got at Jerusalem later made him one of the best educated men of his time. Tarsus gave him breadth and perspective, whilst Jerusalem gave him depth and insight.

As to his international outlook, then, Paul was no accident: Tarsus made him what he was, being the classical centre of culture and international intercourse of the time. Paul was no provincial. The Mediterranean world was his world, with Jerusalem on the east, Rome and Spain on the west, while to the north were the barbarian Scythian peoples,

¹ *Paul, A Study in Social and Religious History*, p. 41. Ray Long and Richard Smith, Inc. Used by permission.

and to the south Arabia and Sinai. Here was the famous pass from East to West, the Calician Gates. Through these Gates passed Alexander, the Cæsars, and later the Crusaders, and the conquering Mohammedan armies. But through them likewise there passed to a new continent, in the person of the preaching vagabond of Tarsus, the Gospel of Christ.

Tarsus! Nearby are the snow-capped mountains of the Taurus range, and the deep wide valleys where "inexpressible sultriness," to quote Deissmann again, "weighs down upon the fields and fever rages up and down the country." Here, too, are the robber-infested Anatolian crags. Paul's "perils" of the "wilderness," "cold," and "robbers" may well have been experienced here. The apostle's world was to be found largely where the sea breezes blow. How well he must have known the Ægean Circle!

It is a mere conjecture, though a conjecture which is in complete harmony with what we know of his later religious life—that Paul was reared by parents no longer young, and that he lived what would be called an unnatural youth; that this bred in him the spirit of self-repression. He became self-sustained, introspective, imaginative, and brooding. The mystery of life, especially its deeper meaning, fascinated him endlessly. He found a measure of relief in meditating on the sacred literature of the great seers and poets of his race. But of course full relief did not come until years later when Christ became the centre of all things for him.

It must have been with eagerness a-quiver with youthful anticipation that Saul the lad took leave of Tarsus for Jerusalem. There would be much of gusto and glee, if glee this serious-minded man ever knew, in this his first adventure in the Holy City, for all that it was a plunge into the unknown. In Gamaliel's college his mind was to be filled with those conventional maxims, stock passions, and theological sanctions which constituted Rabbinic learning. For all his naïveness, his incompleteness of light during the days of his

apprenticeship, Saul was one of those salient souls who intensify one's belief in the boundless possibilities of human nature for good. Already his mind was pearly with the roseate ideals and poetic dreams which the Old Testament, especially the Torah, made possible. Already his was a nature and a mind marvellously alert.

Consider the Jerusalem into which the young Saul entered. Judea is a Roman province ruled by the Herods. The country is heavily garrisoned with Roman soldiers. The people are divided into two camps, the Foreign party headed by the Sadducees, who winked at all things Roman for personal advantage; and the National party headed by the Pharisees, who were in revolt against everything not Jewish. The students of Jerusalem are divided into two schools, that of Hillel and that of Shammai. These great doctors had flourished some fifty years before Saul's time, and it was a grandson of the great Hillel, Gamaliel, who now taught the disciples. Gamaliel was a worthy son of worthy sire. A noble-hearted, liberal-minded Pharisee of the best type. Saul was carried away with him. He was one of the seven doctors in Jewish history who earned the title "Rabban," "My Master." It was said that the glory of the Law perished when Gamaliel died.

We have no means, save conjecture, of filling up the gap between the lad of Tarsus and the Rabbinic student of Jerusalem. It is a far cry from the untrammelled youth of the Tarsus days and the day when he faced Stephen in the Cilician synagogue in fierce conflict over the nature of one Jesus Christ. The Tarsus lad has become one of the marked men of a new generation; is now a trusted and prominent agent of the Sanhedrin. He has accepted a post which keeps him going to and fro between Jerusalem and outlying Jewish colonies. It was thus, in all probability, that Saul had missed personal contact with Jesus at the temple city, and missed contact, too, with the movement raised by the preaching of Jesus, while so soon after he is found in close relations with the Sanhedrin.

III

It is a wider leap from Saul the student of Jerusalem to Paul the Christian apostle busy in his work. But let us take that leap.

Deissmann is probably right when he says bluntly that Paul's own age saw nothing remarkable in the travelling tent-maker. This is not necessarily contradicted by the fact that at Lystra the simple Anatolians, seeing his power over the crowd, were ready to acclaim him a god. Though he grew up in a centre of classical learning, he was ever the tent-manufacturer and Jewish journeyman rather than the Greek scholar whom men admired. But though he was of the unliterary class, he was, as said before, better educated than most men of his city or his age. In fact, he was one of the relatively few supremely educated men of history.

Some see in Paul's attitude of full sympathy for the poor and unwise as against those who considered themselves the wise of the world, an evidence that he was sprung from the lower classes. This is a telling point. Recall how his sharp irony plays like summer lightning over the learned class, whose lot he never esteemed as he did that of the lowly. He had no patience with that "lordly indolence" which the world thinks a mark of greatness in its poets and philosophers. Not only was he the apostle to the Gentiles, but the apostle of work, as well. In this he was in marked contrast to the intellectuals of his time. The Greek philosophers, in particular, held that work was for slaves only; and we have seen that Rome, in her decadence, had the same attitude.

It will be generally agreed, I think, that environment is a profound factor in determining the point and purpose of every religious movement. To be able to understand the nature and function of any such movement as early Christianity, we must be able measurably to reconstruct the age in which it flourished. This, while not the primary aim of this study, save in so far as such a reconstruction will serve to cast light on the person and character of Paul, I have attempted briefly in the preceding chapter. But the origins

and backgrounds of early Christianity have been quite fully explored in recent years. To these the reader must look for a more adequate treatment than can be given in these pages.

Of Paul's youth we know but little, though it is a safe conjecture that it was anything but chaotic or storm-tossed, since in his devout Jewish faith he had been perfectly at home. His Jerusalem sojourn, however, was to prove chaotic and storm-tossed enough in the end. It was apparent some time before his conversion that he was becoming more and more aware of an encircling dissent-region where his expanding mind could no longer find pasture in the parched and dry fields of the "traditions of the elders."

It was a day when the dam which the Jews had raised high around them to keep out foreign waters, was breaking down in many places. "In ever-widening streams, the western waters were pouring in," says one commentator. It might be better to reverse the figure and speak of the Jewish-Christian waters which were soon to burst their bounds and go flowing out to the nations. Saul, though strong in the love he bore his religion, his race, his country—for love of country is axiomatic with all noble souls who have, as he had, their kindly roots in earth—was, nevertheless, universal in outlook. Like the prophets before him, he was of Israel and derived from his race his distinctive qualities; but his sympathies were with every nation, non-national.

This is the man who will take the light of his Hebrew faith, the new-found larger light of Christ, and some glimmer from the glory that was Greece as well, and put them through the prism of his own soul from which it shall be refracted beam after shining beam out to the darkened world.

But his brother Pharisees, their minds banged, barred, and bolted against every reasonable argument or tender appeal—if they be in behalf of strangers to their race and faith—more than once will poke their fingers into their ears and put their hands over their eyes, that hearing they may not hear, and seeing they may not see; and as a last desperate measure resort to every kind of subterfuge and open

gesture to turn away the accusing finger of outraged conscience.

IV

Yes, the transition from Saul of Tarsus to Paul the Christian spans a deep, wide chasm.

With the erection of the Cross containing the body of Jesus, it seemed that the Gospel of emancipation which He embodied and preached had been added to the limbo of shattered illusions, while the old order seemed triumphant still. Indeed, it seemed to stand forth more imposing and self-sufficient than ever. The Idealist from Nazareth had been floored. Had not the President of the immortals finished His sport with Him? Ill fared the Carpenter-Prophet who had dared affront the majesty of hoary-visaged Law. The Sanhedrin had had no trouble in commanding the backing of their *clientele*, or the votes of their own body for Jesus' death. Nor had they any trouble in securing a similar permission later (including that of Saul's), for the death of Stephen.

The Christians cringed while subterranean rivers of passion mounted steadily higher against them. The subterranean rivers of passion reached their crest and crashed through; Stephen sprang into prominence, thundered, and died; the green grass turned crimson washed in his blood; the brown stones which pelted the first Christian martyr rolled in a scarlet heap. Would the young Church be trampled under the hoof of the mad Sanhedrin? It looked so. With the desperation of ruined gamblers the rulers of the Jews threw in all that remained of their diminishing strength in the effort to preserve their place as the rightful religious functionaries of the people. But violent deeds and violent persons come naturally to violent ends. Already they seem conscious of being losers. Inwardly they felt grim defeat, whilst outwardly putting on a bold front.

The acceptance of Christ and the religious reform consequent thereto was a last chance for the Jews. Revolutions

of any kind are a last desperate remedy to be employed only when all else has failed. Jesus was no revolutionary in the ordinary sense. Could the rabbis have known in their day the things which belonged to their peace—could they have gotten past their pride in archaic and outlived traditions; could they have subjected their battlesome prejudice to reason's sway—the greatest tragedy of the centuries, the execution of Jesus, and the consequent alienation of Christians from the Jews, need not have been.

"It was the appointed destiny," says Dr. Atkins, "of Israel not to rule a little state from David's throne in grey old Jerusalem, but rather to lay the foundation upon which the faith and devotion of the ages build their temples; to supply to liturgies their most majestic phrases; to furnish the jurisprudence of nations with its decalogues; to voice a hope, which, reborn in Christianity, has lived across the ages."² But their great ones were unaware of it.

As said before, at no place nor in all of them together, does the Record give us a full picture of Paul. Rather does it etch him but dimly against the background of his wistful and turbulent age. For all that we know through his works, he is one of the East's most enigmatic persons. This is especially so of his early life.

If his face was arresting—and we may be sure that it was—this was due to its homeliness rather than to any natural beauty it possessed. He was a man of plain features. This much we know from the remarks of his enemies regarding his speech and appearance. While a fair face and gaudy dress may spell personal adornment, it is quite otherwise that the heights of spiritual adornment are reached; in this the eyes play a chief part. His eyes, though dimmed by disease, possessed, one feels, an irradiating spirit which proclaimed the imperial powers of the mind that sat enthroned within. Eyes that were attentive and full of a certain vitality of peace; eyes that were accustomed to scan

² G. G. Atkins, *The Making of the Christian Mind*, p. 6. Ray Long and Richard R. Smith, Inc. Used by permission.

the high horizons, to encompass ethereal distances; deep cavernous eyes, great gazing eyes, eyes that were regal; eyes of soft fire set in a dreamy and swarthy face; "eyes with lambent wisdom lit." Unquestionably Paul was one of commanding personality; one in whose person power resided. His entrance into any company would command attention. He would quickly become the centre of all eyes and interests. His was a force not dependent on outward trappings; it was inherent in his spirit, a tremendous outreach of *character*.

v

Great stress has been put upon the differences between Paul and Jesus. The essential difference between the mighty Tarsan and the great Galilean is the difference between the city and the country. The truth of this even a casual examination of the structure of their respective teachings will show. One single thing—the illustrations which each employed—is proof enough. The thought and discourses of Jesus are country-centred; while all Paul's thinking is city-centred.

Jesus loved the country and sought for the blooming fields, the sunny mountainside, or the tree-lined roadside as preferable places for His preaching. But Paul sought the cities. Jesus shunned synagogue and temple, but as preaching places Paul preferred these above all others. In the eleventh chapter of Mark's Gospel we have an account of Jesus attending the great feast of the Passover in Jerusalem. Each day He spends in the temple and elsewhere within the city teaching, but Mark says significantly, "As each evening came on he went out of the city." He was always drawn to the country. One cannot imagine Paul leaving the city at night; he clung to the city, loved it, was restless anywhere else. Jesus drew His illustrations from nature; Paul got his from the teeming life of organized cities and the works of men.

Much of Paul's life was spent in surroundings of great

natural beauty. He grew up in sight of the snow-capped hills of the Taurus range. He travelled through the beautiful valleys of Lycaonia. Again and again he sailed the blue Mediterranean and the *Ægean* skirting the shores of Greece's lovely isles. He was familiar with the lovely Greek sky, the Macedonian hills, and with fair Arcadian vales. More than once he had gazed upon the Olympian heights where the gods were supposed to have their home. He knew the flower-filled fields of Palestine, the fruited plains of Asia Minor, the sunshine of Italy. Due to his wide travels, Paul had seen more of the marvels of nature than had all the prophets, David, and Jesus put together, but they impressed him not at all. Moses had been moved by these things, Amos took note of them, David sang of them, Jesus revelled in them. But Paul never saw them. "There is much more sympathy with nature," says Hayes, "more of poetic feeling and insight in a single psalm of David, a single prophecy of Isaiah or Amos, a single parable of our Lord than in all the epistles of Paul."³ All his similes, illustrations, and teachings are drawn from the manners and customs of men—the courtroom, the schoolroom, the gymnasium, the athletic field, and the battlefield, rather than nature. His writings are as devoid of the majesty of mountain, the ripple of water, and the magic of flower as are Calvin's Institutes or Euclid's Elements. The severe and awful beauty of the Parthenon clean escaped him. Round the curve of the bay at Puteoli, Vesuvius rose against the sky—then the garden-covered, vine-smothered sleeping Vesuvius. Below lay Herculaneum and Pompeii in all their Greek brilliance with just twenty years more to live. But none of these things moved him. Like Socrates and Samuel Johnson, he had no time for green field, garden, bee, or bird; he hated the quiet places of nature; he found his rapture in work done among the human throng. It was the price of his single-minded devotion to a supreme cause. Absolute single-mindedness

³ D. R. Hayes, *Paul and His Epistles*, p. 75. The Abingdon Press. Used by permission.

requires a deliberate rejection of many material satisfactions, good in themselves, which conflict with the achievement of a spiritual goal. Result? The singleness of his eye made his body full of light. It made possible the "integration of personality."

Paul's was a spiritual life. He was interested in men, in congregations, in ideas and all of the intangible things of the spirit, such as sin, salvation, spiritual conflict. He was absorbed in these things. And just as absorption in things scientific made Huxley colour-blind and Darwin dumb to art and music, so absorption in things purely spiritual had blinded Paul to the beauties of nature. It was a great price to pay even for religion, but it was better for Paul to be blind on this side of his nature than on the other. If the apostle gave scant attention to art, philosophy, literature, and nature, it was because he was convinced that

*"Religion is the chief concern
Of mortals here below."*

Paul's world was filled with immemorial cities, heroes, students, merchants, athletes, poets, slaves, scholars, political aspirants, and the ceaseless activity these suggest. He moved in the gloom and glory, the sordidness and surge of the historic Levant.

VI

There can be little doubt that Paul was well acquainted with Greece's Golden Age. Why did he make so little of it? Possibly it did not impress him as it does us. He was closer to it. Obviously he was not fascinated by it—saw in it little that could minister to the uplift of the masses of men.

True, Greece was a great civilization; the Golden Age was the finest expression of that civilization. It claimed such men as Homer, Euripides, Æschylus, Heraclitus, Phidias, Aristotle, and Plato. Men rightly thrill to the glory that was Greece.

And yet, Hellenic civilization—like that of Egypt before

it, and Rome after it—rested upon the backs of a slave population. Only a few—the cultured, moneyed, well-born few—were given an opportunity to enjoy the best things of the race. Paul believed in the best for all. Moreover, Greece, like Palestine, is a small country, her development was limited to only a few city areas. Paul desired for the cities of the wide world the finest that Christ and Christian culture could give. Splendid as was Greek efflorescence, the brutal fact remains, that the flower was an exotic bloom and withered quickly away. Paul panted for something enduring. True, it was a flower whose beauty and fragrance have passed to all succeeding ages, but man cannot live upon the aroma of a classical and departed culture. Then, too, the classical age tempts men to look backward toward former glories rather than forward to new glories yet to be. Paul had no illusion of a Golden Age that had passed—not even of the Hebrew Golden Age in which he saw many things worthy of perpetuation—but a vision of a Golden Age that work and the application of the principles of Christ could bring.

Perhaps no man of his day was better qualified to know both East and West than Paul of Tarsus. As one has phrased it: "There were rulers of this period who could boast of their Jewish origin, their Roman citizenship, their Hellenistic culture, and their wide education. But, after all, they were rulers, and because of their seclusion and apartness could not know the lower orders of society in both East and West quite so well as Saul knew them. As a tent-maker, he was of the people, enjoyed their confidence, and shared both their wisdom and desires."⁴ With him, especially after his conversion, there was neither East nor West; they had grown together; there was neither border, nor breed, nor birth.

"Without having breathed this spirit from birth," continues Van Buskirk, "and without having witnessed the re-

⁴ W. R. Van Buskirk, *Saviours of Mankind*, p. 414. The Macmillan Company. Used by permission.

sults of it upon both government and religion, no Jew would have dared attempt that modification of Judaism which Saul of Tarsus advocated. In fact, the venture, of necessity had been begun by his father, and perhaps by his grandfather, before him. Saul grew up in a home where the lines of sanctity were necessarily already somewhat loosened. No one generation could have dared go the whole length of the Pauline Gospel. There is too much tolerance toward Greek, Roman, and Oriental modes of thought in the mind of Saul, and too much willingness to modify his own religion, for him to have been the product of strict Palestinian Judaism. Hellenism had taken hold upon the Jews of the *Diaspora* with the same subtle charm with which it had captivated the other Orientals.”⁵

And so to both of the leading Jewish parties Paul was unacceptable; to them he seemed the most unJewish of all the Jews. He was not national enough in spirit for the Pharisees, who were the ultra-conservatives in national policy; and to the Sadducees, who were the ultra-conservatives in theology, though they were the liberals in government, he was not sufficiently orthodox.

Saul had been able to put on the mind of Greece and Rome and Christ without putting off the mind of Israel. Saul's teacher, Gamaliel, was the most liberal of Jewish teachers. It is claimed that it was he who first introduced Greek learning among the Jews, though it was a law among them given by the older rabbis, “Cursed is he that teacheth his son Greek wisdom.” A tradition coming from Samuel, the son of Gamaliel, tells us that of the one thousand students in his father's school, half of them studied Greek learning and the other half Jewish law. Saul was already well along in Greek literature, and it is more than a sound conjecture that he studied the Law. In the school of Gamaliel he advanced in the Jew's religion beyond any of his age or race. Gamaliel made Saul a zealot, for a time, a

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 418.

fanatical champion of Judaism. Though weak as water in respect of a new departure such as Christianity, Gamaliel had water's astonishing gift of transmitting force. Hear his words to that party within his sect which was bent on stamping out the followers of Jesus: "Let these men alone, for if this work be of men, it will be overthrown: but if it is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them."⁶

The Man of Tarsus entered the mart of human striving at his real value. What could be of more profit than to accompany him as he treks the roads of the peoples, and those also of the Infinite Isles? For, as Carlyle said, "Great men, taken up in any way, are profitable company." The streams of history flow largely from and through persons. Already Paul embodies the spirit of an unborn day.

⁶ Acts 5:38-39.

IV

THE MEASURE OF THE MAN

I

IT is clear that in the history of classic Christianity two names are pre-eminent: Jesus of Nazareth and Paul of Tarsus. The one is the divine Founder of the Christian Church, the other the greatest human figure in its spread and development. They do not stand side by side as equals, Jesus and Paul, but after Jesus Paul is first. Christ the great Light, Paul the great satellite; the one the Master, the other His greatest messenger the Master has ever had.

If the New Testament should be arranged in the chronological order of its documents, the earlier epistles of Paul would form its gateway. Upon entering this gateway we are at once face to face with the most influential uprush of spiritual power in all human history. Christianity, newly born, is beginning its thrilling adventure in the world. The central figure in that thrilling adventure is Paul.

“This tremendous human” was a thinker of the first magnitude, a first rate intellect—the finest, someone has said, between the time of Aristotle and Michael Angelo—the star of brightest shining in the firmament which is Christianity. Then, too, Paul was a mirror, a microcosm of the first Christian century; his life was an epitome, some would say an abridgment, of the religion of Jesus. Anyhow, he largely fashioned early Christianity, and made himself the mirror which reflected it.

Like Jesus, Paul was both man and woman, double-sexed, so to speak, and sterile, too perfect a human type to care to reproduce itself physically, but as to the progeny of the spirit, endlessly reproductive. His white passion for perfection of character consumed the heat of all his other

desires. These he sublimated to the ends of Christ. Marry? the great drive of his solitary ambition would not let him marry.¹ In this, as in other matters, he was extraordinary. In a sense Paul was nonpareil, unique, "the typical exponent of Christianity," it has been said, "and its greatest doctor." None but unthinking and ungrateful people can minimize Paul; for all Christians of whatever sort have drawn their water from his deep well.

The lives of these pivotal men, Jesus and Paul, Saviour and servant, Redeemer and redeemed, run together like smooth ribbon. Nor can environment—the fact that Paul was a town man and a Greek by culture, whilst Jesus was a man of the countryside and a Jew; or essential nature—the fact that one was divine whilst the other was human to his finger-tips, and not simply inclination of differences of religious experience, be held responsible for the contrasting qualities to be found in them.

In one sense it may be said there were two Pauls, Paul the theologian and Paul the Christian. The one pronounced dogmas and used Rabbinic arguments some of which are not gripping today; the most characteristic and Christianly expression of the other was: "For me to live is Christ." Underneath his speech forms Paul's basic convictions were those of Jesus. Jesus was little given to forms and methods. He was spirit and life.

It is too obvious to need pressing that Paul was the soul of early Christianity, strict in its ethics, deep in its spirit, broad in its vision, yet plain sturdy, uncompromising, adventurous. He was a man firm and solid, made of stern and indefatigable stuff. He was strongly individualistic; but so were the men who worked with him. Mark and Barnabas, the good, Timothy and Luke the physician, were not so many replicas in dough of Paul himself.

¹ It is true that some scholars think it probable that Paul had been married, but there is little or no evidence for this. The only thing that can be adduced to support the conjecture is the tradition that no one could be a member of the Sanhedrin, as Paul seems to have been, unless he were married.

In the Jewish apostles Christianity was bound by geography; in Paul it had only frontiers. In this, as in other respects, the Jewish apostles compared with Paul as moons in the same sky with the sun. Where he differed from them was where genius differs from talent or acquired gifts, not in mere attitude, but in art and passion. He moved among them not proudly, but somewhat gigantic, somewhat ominous. He gave to his cause all his passion, intensity, genius. Having odd wells of enthusiasm and deep veins of courage in him, nothing on earth could overawe him—nothing but Christ, and Christ was unearthly, heavenly.

In his tough spirit there was much of Stoic dignity, nothing of procrastination, yet a noble patience where patience was needful. There was no trace in him, as indeed not in the Jewish faith either, of that weariness of life which lay like a shadow across Rome. In him the rational and the religious met and fructified each other. With him mass and greatness were not, as with us, one and the same thing. Just as the prophets of Israel saw in the *remnant* salvation for the many, so Paul saw success in minorities. To the divinity of majorities, so much revered among us, he paid no homage. Nor did he take the superiority of the ancients for granted. In these things he was exceptional.

History has known but few world-revolutionaries, men who have done such deeds that human life after them could not be the same as before, but Paul was one of them; Jesus was another. In order to refashion the human spirit, to create a new spiritual masterpiece, to perfect a new society, both were willing to lose themselves in a strange anonymity. But the world was not willing to have it so. It has crowned them greatest of the race's benefactors. It is not by accident that Paul (next to Christ) has become the first hero of Christianity. He met the full possibility of life in its joy and tragedy unflinchingly and with uncomplaining fortitude. He felt himself the instrument of destiny. Men everywhere respond to such a man. Paul dreamed great dreams and trusted his soul to them, trained and plumed himself to realize them.

*"To love and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates."*

Such was his faith. It was Paul who made the primitive Church a going and conquering concern. Until he came on the scene it was a movement somewhat undirected, at any rate, it was not definitely moving toward a definite goal; was very much unaware, as Glover has said, of where it was going. Paul gave it direction and added momentum.

II

Why do we of the twentieth century still look to Paul? Have we not outgrown him?

No, before we can pass Paul we must first catch up with him; and this we have not yet done. To be sure, we have passed to larger light on some minor points, or we think we have; but in all the ways that seriously count he is still beyond us. Our greatest possibilities for spiritual progress lie not so much in improving on or going beyond Paul as in coming more nearly up to him.

We of today have been privileged to witness greater advance in scientific and theoretic knowledge than has any age since the Golden Age of Greece; and in the realm of material and mechanical progress it is not too much to say that we are the peers of any men in the world's history.

But we can assume, with any hope of sustaining the assumption in fact, that because we know more than our fathers about the movement of the stars and electrons; the magic inner workings of the atom and the origin of living organisms; or because we have harnessed to our use and comfort electricity, radio activity and the magic forces of the air, that we have therefore any greater insight into the deeper meaning of religion or the ultimate meaning of life? In the knowledge of the intricate laws of the material universe we surpass by far our ancestors, but when it is a question of How may I improve my soul? or What must I do to be saved? we turn to Paul and Jesus of fifty generations ago. We must sit in humility at the feet of religious geniuses

whose day we antedate by twenty centuries. For once we make progress by going backwards. The followers of Buddha or Lao-Tze make progress only as they advance beyond their founders. Not so with the followers of Jesus and Paul; their progress lies in coming more nearly up to them, not in surpassing them; for, beyond them we can hardly hope to go. All times and tongues lay claim to these as their own—spiritual goals toward which we shall still need to press, no matter what shall be our degree of spiritual attainment.

Paul is a Mount Shasta-like figure, standing there as he does at the headwaters of our faith, what modern psychology calls a “mutation”—that is, something or someone which cannot be explained in terms of inheritance or environment. But just as Mount Shasta rises sheer out of the plain eleven thousand feet below it, and it is difficult to see where it comes from, so it is difficult to account for the lonely human peak which is Paul of Tarsus. To change the scene and not the figure, Paul is like Mount Fujiyama in Japan, visible from everywhere, an inexhaustible personality who has shaped the thought of the Church for nineteen hundred years. Paul through all these centuries has been a teacher of pre-eminent power. The love that went out from his blazing heart and the ideas which flashed from his creative mind have become part of the intellectual and spiritual equipment of Western civilization, and through the efforts of modern missionaries are beginning to refashion civilizations and peoples of the changeless East.

Paul is easily the greatest human figure in the New Testament, and probably in the whole of Christian story. It is but the truth to say that his influence has been the steady on-going of a Christ-born spirit through all Christian history; and that the strong, pure current of his life runs through all things Christian like the passage of the Gulf Stream through the ocean. He lost himself in the surging life about him, but today emerges on every hand with the strands of that life intertwining the texture of our religious

fabric. His was the brain and the body which housed the keenest intellect and the warmest heart of his century and forged the logical framework and the great thought forms of Christianity; he was the man under God who made Christianity a world religion; he built the bridge between the Galilean Jesus and the universal Christ, indeed, was himself the human bridge between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. It was he who taught men to know Christ after the *spirit*, the only way left for them to know Christ when He was *flesh* no more.

III

I am convinced that Paul's abiding fascination for men is due not to his outward history and deeds, striking as these are—but to his unique *inwardness*. By the invocation of Christ he brought his external life under the complete dominance of his internal. His decisive struggles, acute sufferings, imprisonments—all proved to be but occasions for the welling forth of his inner life in its wealth and beauty. His was a life that bubbled up copiously from unknown inward deeps, and has been incorporated effectively into the life of Christendom. “Man himself is a great deep,” said Augustine, and if it be true of men in general—and we know it is—how much more is it true of the apostle to the Gentiles!

In Paul's inwardness, that is to say his religious experience, lies his authority. It is the authority of Christian experience. Experience is not only “the raw stuff of religion,” it is the essence of revelation. If Paul has a revelation of God to offer—and he does—it is because he has had an experience of God in Christ. The revelation which the prophets transmitted to us, as J. E. Rattenbury has said, was but their religious experience preserved and passed on to us. *It is precisely because Paul was the truest experient of Christ that he makes the best revelation of Christ, is Christ's truest interpreter.* In nothing is there such authority as in experience. It will be recalled that when Jesus proclaimed the inwardness of His divine rule that the people

saw at once the difference between His method and that of the legalist, saying, "He speaks as one having authority and not as the scribes." Theirs was the authority of rules written in a book; His was the authority of goodness embodied in a life, an experience with God. It was not otherwise with Paul.

In these studies we shall be looking within the soul-depths and heart-caverns of the *Man of Tarsus* to discover there what we may of help for us hot-footed pilgrims on the Road of Life. By the above I do not mean that we shall neglect his outward life, for in a sense, the inward is to be found in the outward. For instance, the primary value of the Book of Acts is said to lie in the fact that it is a record of the outward events in the life of the apostle, which is true; and the student of the mind and spirit of Paul must look to Paul's own letters, which give little attention to outward things, for data regarding his inner life. And yet, he must make considerable use of Acts in order to see Paul in his true environment, his historical and geographical setting. Acts, while not strictly a biography of Paul, is a remarkable history of the expansion of early Christianity in the Mediterranean world of the first century, and sheds more light than we at first suspect on the life of Paul.

IV

Notwithstanding Paul's wide departure in many respects from the Jew, he was to the end a Jew through and through. Late in his life and on his last visit to Jerusalem he appeased the angry mob who wanted to tear him to pieces by shouting, "I am a Pharisee, a son of a Pharisee, I have renounced nothing of the Jewish creed." A Hebrew when he started, he is a Hebrew when he ends, and yet he is neither Hebraic nor Hellenic, but universal and cosmopolitan. Always something more than a Jew, he was, after Christ, the first international man.

Paul is a shining example of a man transformed by a set of creative ideas, one of them being "the brotherhood of

man through the Saviourhood of Christ." To him the temporal Jesus of history had become the ever-present Christ of experience. This and kindred ideas got planted in Paul's mind on the Damascus road. And while it has not ceased to be a fruitful idea down to our day, it has not come to full fruition yet; when it does "the parliament of men and the federation of the world" will no longer be merely a cherished dream of poets and preachers, but a solid reality. When such a day comes, it will be due in no small degree to the spacious mind and brotherly heart of the great Tarsan who lived what a poet has preached:

*"God hath given me birth
To brother all the sons of earth."*

No small-minded dogmatic zealot was the dapper tent-weaver of Tarsus.

Still—he was the Jew. He was the Jew in his teaching. We have the crimson of his Christian life told against the crepe of his Jewish religious background. His writings abound in analogies from history and society, in illustrations from city and civil life, in metaphors, similes, comparisons without number, as already shown, from the teeming life of man about him—all summoned to set forth Christ and Gospel truth. Jew he was also as regards the manner and method of his thinking, though it is plain that here the Greek edged in on him sharply. The Jew was all contemplation; the Greek speculation. In this Paul was more Jew than Greek. He was a genius at contemplation. With inimitable expertness he can portray the experiences of the soul sunk in sin or rapt in fellowship with God.

Paul was what psychologists call an "introvert," one skilled in contemplating the inner mysteries of personality; one capable of plumbing the deep wells of his nature which go down into and beyond the unconscious foundations of life. Like the Jews generally, Paul had little interest in philosophy. His mentality was missionary rather than academic, in fact he betrays sharp aversion, at times, to the

academic mind. Yet, unlike Jesus and most Biblical authors, who express themselves mainly in word pictures, that is parables and short aphoristic sayings, Paul sometimes looks through "the analyzing spectacles of logic." But he seldom, if ever, attempts to pick his way along the remote heights of pure philosophy. Rather, he lived in the thought world of religious reality. His life was as brilliant as flame and almost as sure to burn.

While Paul was the Jew, he was more. One of the little outward ways in which he was not a Jew, was his manifest love for the sea. There is no Jewishness in his love of sea-voyaging, but it is just another evidence of his metropolitanism. Whilst *en masse* the Jews had a horror of the sea and all things connected with a seafaring life, Paul loved it. To them the sea was the chaos out of which the order and beauty of the land had evolved. To them the waves always typified disorder and rebellion; the passage on dry ground through the Red Sea into the Promised Land typed the salvation which to them was the greatest, and in the ideal future, as pictured in the Revelation, "there shall be no more sea." The Greeks were born lovers of the sea; the Jews of mountains.

Paul brought a richly-furnished consciousness to the vision of God. In this he was like the greater prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries, though he was not poet to the degree that most of them were. His words have not the poetic beauty of them or Jesus, though the great thoughts of both Jesus and the prophets are embodied in his vigorous prose. Perhaps the difference may be explained by the fact that Paul's message was not forged in tragedy, as was that of the prophets, but had its origin in a glad new emancipation. Perhaps tragedy is a better breeder of poetry than transport. No great song but holds a sigh imprisoned. The Christly soul takes the sigh and out of it builds the song.

A recent biographer says of the youthful Augustine that he was made up of sex and brain, "both at white heat and each at war with the other." Not so Paul; that he was one

part brain, and that a very large part, all who know him must admit. But he felt no need to mate with woman. This gadfly which so sharply stings alike common men and great natures, even men of genius and sanctity, seems not to have been among his "perils." Yet in Paul there abode both a satyr and an angel; his first years, he considered, belonged essentially to the satyr, whereas the last thirty years or so of his life were ruled by the angel.

V

That Paul was a man of his time I have freely granted. Effective men always are. Their thought and speech forms, to have cogency, must be contemporary. They must be men of their periods or pronounce messages that are vague and inept.

But Paul has turned out to be far more a man of all periods than a man of any particular period. This is truer of Jesus even than of Paul, but it is true of Paul, too. The opening words of Dr. Deissmann in the preface to his fine book on Paul come to mind. "Paul, a man of the ancients, a *homo novus*, rising from the mass of the insignificant many, heeded by no man of letters among his pagan contemporaries, yet destined to be a leading personality in the world's history . . . at once a classic of mysticism and a most practical man of affairs; a prophet and dreamer, crucified to the world in Christ, yet forever memorable as a citizen of the world and a traveller in it, and still moulding the world at the present moment."—Words, I am convinced, none too strong as touching both Paul's comparative obscurity in the day in which he lived and his universal influence now.

The letters of Paul afford us an extraordinary wealth of self-disclosure. In them, it is generally admitted, we have a fuller knowledge of the inner life of their author than of any other great personality of the ancient world. Paul gave himself away in his letters, and in giving himself away, enriched the world more than he could have dreamed. Paul's

soul—and what a soul it was!—passed into his writings; in them he still lives, possessing the power to move mightily our souls, causing us to pause, reflect and worship. The history of his soul as reflected here will live forever among the archives of the spirit of man. But for a fuller treatment of the man as revealed by his words we shall wait for a later chapter.² Suffice it to say here that the mind of any man is the vestibule to his character. We know so well the character of Paul because incidentally he tells us so much about himself. His writings are naïvely autobiographical. They are personal letters, creations of the crucial moment, often passionate and vehement, and “marked,” as one observes, “by the incaution of a man who did not weigh the effect of his words, on his reputation.” He seems to have been indifferent as to their preservation, hoping only for them a temporal and practical usefulness. Jesus had poured His tremendous words on the wind, not caring, seemingly, what became of them; and Paul poured his great prose on the ground in about the same fashion. His words came to him, it seems, so effortlessly that he undervalued them, overlooking them in the pressure of his work.

VI

Few there are, indeed, who can merit the high title of *genius*. But here is a man whom the ages have voted a genius—Jewish genius, imaginative, brooding, colourful, and a bit dire. Paul is one of a dozen of religious geniuses that have been given the world; he is one of time’s great sons; a pioneer standing among the intrepid ones of the earth; a pilgrim of the long road, one of history’s noted pathfinders, one who stands and will stand to the end of time “a witness to all those who dare the lonely road that ends in the freedom of Christ.” Being a religious genius, the more of genius for religion possessed either by an individual or an age, the better they both shall comprehend him; for, as

² See Chap. xi.

Glover says, "Genius rather than scholarship is the touchstone by which to test genius."

The genius, wherever and whenever he appears, is a sort of unestablished proof of man's God-like origin. Its emergence in any sphere is a thing no one can understand. Moreover, genius, and religious genius in particular, is a powerful reminder of the far-reaching possibilities of the human spirit; and therefore the genius should be applauded and recognized by his age, and celebrated by all succeeding ages. The former seldom happens, or is belated; the latter seldom fails to happen. Genius serves as the best incentive to the masses of men, spurring them to greater effort, helping to a correct judgment of themselves, enabling them to see their ineffectiveness in the light of high achievement and supreme living. Best of all, it demonstrates what the individual may be.

Genius is personality *par excellence*. And character inheres only in personality. And personality is power. It is the master force of civilization and bulks largest by far in the spiritual on-going of the race. Every great achievement of history and every prized institution of men is but the lengthened shadow of some supreme personality. Noted personalities tower peak-like on the range of historic events, lifting to higher levels the whole course of life. And yet it is but the truth to say (but how heartening a truth!) that the greatest personality, the most towering genius only reveals and pushes into prominence the worth that lies latent in the most common of us.

Paul was a genius. He had the excess and disproportion of genius. Religious geniuses *see* where others grope. They have longer vision and deeper insight into *eternal reality* than do the masses of men. They may be faced with insuperable difficulty in communicating what they see, but they see it none the less. Every mystic spirit knows the incommunicability of positive religious experience. He feels himself tongue-tied when it comes to giving any adequate expression to his deepest religious or even human feelings.

So Paul felt, more than once. So must every *seeing* soul have felt time and again. Yes, "They *see* where others grope. But somehow the beautiful objects which they create straightway become the priceless possessions of the race, and they reveal the fact that we who are of similar stature bear nevertheless in our inner structure capacities of appreciation which fit the supreme creations of genius."³ The poetry of Shakespeare, of so high an order from the standpoint of the ordinary man, finds none the less a ready response from him. And God, who is an object of unquestioned reality to the religious genius, breaks, at least dimly, on the souls of the most ordinary of us. Spiritual geniuses in the religious world are like "mutations" in the biological world—they mark its upward progress from what *is* to what *ought to be*. They already *are* what we are striving to be, and at the same time they transcend all that *has been and is*. *They are living prophecies, guarantors of what is to be.*⁴ Religious geniuses not only reveal the large capacities of *their* souls; they help us to see the latent capacities of *ours*.

VII

Great events and great personalities have a way of being inseparably conjoined. Every notable event or memorable epoch is more a thing of personality than an affair of time. Great periods are invariably made by great persons. If the great man is not the creator of the memorable age or event, he is its true embodiment and summation. Carlyle's dictum that history is mainly biography has much to commend it. One age dies in Caiphas and the traditionalists; another is born in Christ and the Christians. There is a sense in which every age is "a dream that is dying or one that is coming to birth." Unique moments or movements have no meaning apart from unique persons. And frequently what has been for long a-dawning, often comes to light suddenly in

³ Rufus M. Jones, *New Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 17. The Macmillan Company. Used by permission.

⁴ *Op. Cit.*, p. 41.

the appearance of a great man; and this while the past was unconscious of the dawning future until the unique person ushered in the unique hour. Often "the great genius is a vital junction of a past that was and a future that is to be." Such was John the Baptist. With John, the Jewish age expired; with him the Christian Era was born. He marked the consummation of the old and the beginning of the new.⁵ In Paul the old order of the Moses Law and scribal traditions passed into the era of Christ and the Church. In him Judaism receded and Christianity strode forth.

Christianity profoundly altered Judaism. To use a biological term, it was a "mutation," not merely the old amended or modified; but something novel, unique. It looked different on the outside, hence the bitter opposition it met with; it *was* different in its *essence*. The Judaizers thought to adopt the unusual child into the Jewish family. But they would have made the Church a thing so icily regular that the full life of the human spirit, much less the Christ-spirit, could never have flowed through it. Peter and others of the chief "pillars" were willing to have it so; but thanks to Paul, who would have no cramping, making way for the winds of God to blow as they listed.

The heart of Paul's Gospel was this: The new life was something which could be achieved by all; they had only to believe and it was realized in them. That such a doctrine had its dangers and was open to grave distortions, events were soon to show; a certain group in the Church at Corinth took advantage of this liberty to hold that salvation could be achieved without any reference to ethical conduct. They were given to orgiastic ecstasy. But, says Paul, Christianity is a religion of ethics, not of ecstasy. He believes that speaking with tongues is a gift of the Spirit; but nothing can come from the Spirit that is inconsistent with holiness. His Gospel possessed a driving force which the old conception lacked—its concentration on the power of Christ to save the

⁵ See the Author's *Cardinal Characters of the New Testament*, p. 33, for a fuller discussion of this point.

sinner, rather than on the need of the sinner struggling to save himself. This was the preaching of Judaism. The way of Judaism was Law; the way of Christ was Life. "My Gospel," he exclaims in tones of no uncertain confidence. It was the lever by means of which he turned the world upside down.

Picture, then, an unimpressive-looking Jew, moving across the ancient world preaching this Gospel for the first time! Often he preaches it before the synagogue of a strange city, now and again he proclaims it unashamed before contemptuous magistrates, sometimes creeping through the narrow lanes of the ghetto where he was marked out for murder, on his way to some secret upper room where the Church awaited him. In the fire of his enthusiasm he was liable at any moment to be rapt into visions which drowned his eloquence in a flood of incoherent speech and transport his hearers into the contemplation of the eternal mysteries which made them seem the veriest of living realities. Yet—he could argue, according to the general outlook of the educated world of his day, in the mixed vein of Jewish religion and Greek speculation, until shrewd and learned men were impressed by his ability and the sheer force of his personality.

Paul is a man of quivering sensitiveness; his temperament fluctuates almost in a single hour from purest optimism to the depths of despair. His courage—and he was one of the most courageous of men—was that which comes not from nature but from unquestioning faith in the Master he serves. Knowing his devotion to his chosen work, his intimates were always ready at his imperious bidding to leave their homes and face the risks of travel and persecution in his service. A John Mark or certain of the Judaist converts who knew him but slightly might resent his autocracy; his intimates were ready to go to prison or death for him. He might trample on his pride, as he did, "but he could never throw away the certainty that he was right or tolerate any failure in the face of danger." When he began his career Christianity was a

Jewish sect; when he finished it was a world Church; he had changed the history of mankind.

VIII

Most students will agree with Wernle that "Paul never knew Jesus during His lifetime, but nevertheless it was he who best understood Him." Paul taught us Christianity. In him is found the reproduction and development of the teaching of Jesus. And Christianity, as Baron von Hugel has said, taught us *to care*. Caring is the great thing. Sin does not care. The pagan world did not care. Dr. Anderson Scott has pointed out that while much of the teaching of Jesus is in the imperative mood, He has but one command: "Thou shalt love." As Jesus' one command was "Love," so for Paul "Agape," love or caring, is the essence of Christianity; and this is the master key to the hearts of men. Paul transmitted the fire of Christ, adding the while, his own.

While Paul lived all lesser luminaries in the Church shone faint before his sun. It is so today, twenty centuries afterward.

Of Paul's early life and forebears we know next to nothing. But we do not need to know much of one's ancestry to know a great deal about the man, when he has left, as Paul has, a virile body of writing. From these outward "leads" we can move inward to "find" the man in his shrine. Certain it is that the facts of any notable life, if we may know them, are of more value than anything the imagination can invent or logic deduce. But biography must have the service of creative imagination to achieve that synthesis which is the goal of any art. As to most that is vital in Paul's life, we should not be better off if we had his pedigree to a dozen generations. Paul's printed works declare the man. "Shakespeare," said Emerson, "is the only biography of Shakespeare." And Paul is the only true biographer of Paul.

As I have said, it is not the age of the apostle which is the

central quest of our study, but the *man*; yet we shall have to see the man in his age to truly see him. It was the aim of the chapters immediately preceding this to portray the man *in his age*. In this we have been trying to get a surface view of Paul the man. In those which follow we shall be looking at the essential spirit and soul of this man whose colossal, consecrated, sanctified, disciplined personality still lays its spell upon men.

One comes to Paul expecting to find a teacher of religion, and finds a man. His is the supreme distinction of making theological meditation humanly delightful. Like Pascal, he is a master of aphorism. Many a sentence of his contains material for a whole chapter or book. His manner is fervid, but the gripping excellence of his writing rescues him from theology and claims him for literature. For instance, love is the central theme of all literature; a theme more written about than any other since the world began. The poets of all languages and of all generations have sung its praises. Yet it was reserved for this persecuted Jew, in a letter written casually and in haste, to sing the song of love surpassing anything composed by any poet of the ancient or modern world. A man of action surpassed the poets, from Homer to our own day, in their own field.

In the first letter to the Corinthians, which contains his deathless words concerning love, Paul bursts into deathless speech on another subject—when he sings the victory over death in chapter xv. Here, as everywhere when his heart speaks, his words have a peculiar beauty and pathos; and no rhetorical artifice weakens the strong rush of his eloquence. It is the sovereignty of genius, against which there is no fighting. It imposes its irresistible will upon us. As Bacon taught philosophy to speak English, so Paul taught Christian mysticism to speak lucid and limpid Greek. But I reserve for another chapter a fuller treatment of his style and words.

PART TWO

V

DAMASCUS AND THE NEW PAUL

IN the foregoing chapters I have, of course, anticipated in part, the story of Paul the Christian. We must now look at him in his pre-Christian days, briefly glimpsing his doings as the very active agent of the Sanhedrin in its effort to stamp out the Christian sect. The remainder of this volume shall be devoted to the tracing of his spiritual pilgrimage from Damascus to his death.

That Damascus was the supreme landmark in the spiritual development of Paul, ought to be obvious. Before Damascus he was incapable of understanding or appreciating Jesus, he hated Him and did all he could to down that name; whereas, after Damascus he loved Him and did all he could to place His name high above every name. Opposition is a form of sympathy; Saul, at first, so hated Jesus because in spite of himself he was coming secretly to admire Him. Jesus interested Saul; he could not escape the haunting beauty of that Life.

This fact is made clear by the martyrdom of Stephen. Perhaps the person of Stephen affords as accurate a glimpse into the character of this particular period as any we can get. It is but a glimpse that we have of the Proto-Martyr, but a most revealing one. He was a deacon, a man of humble position in the primitive Church, but during his meteoric career his figure is the most towering. To describe him is to utter a line of superlatives. He possessed a magnetic personality, marked oratorical powers, great learning, unusual administrative capacity. He was possessed of the

grace of the angels, had apparently great personal beauty. In the Cilician synagogue at Jerusalem he gave a powerful address which caused him to be drug out and murdered. Saul, now the agent of the Sanhedrin, presided over the sorry affair.

We wish we knew more of the great controversies in the Cilician synagogue and the fiery petrol who precipitated them, yet we know a good deal; for when Saul became a Christian, his opponent's theology became his own. It was Stephen's gospel, Stephen's sermons, Stephen's preaching of the Messiah, above all, the memory of Stephen's radiant face which Saul took away with him into the Arabian retreat, and on which he fashioned the lines of his own first teaching.

The cutting down of Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost and youthful fire, was like felling an oak. A gust of frightful depression swept over Saul as he reflected on the abyss between himself and that radiant spirit. As he looked into that face writhing in the throes of peaceful death, he felt a nostaglia for a new world, the kind of world he had dreamed of as he pondered the Messianic hopes of the poets and preachers of old Israel; but even more than this, he was sighing for a new world within his storm-tossed nature.

In consenting to the death of Stephen, Saul had done violence to himself. The accusing eyes of the dying man were unforgettable. Saul and the Jews had succeeded in silencing that golden tongue, but they had succeeded, as well, in breaking the back of their cause; and now Saul's heart was breaking, too. It has been said that if Saul had any earthly ordination, he had it from the hands of the youthful mystic-prophet Stephen, that first forceful leader of the early Church, whose face "shone like an angel."

I

Our first sight of Saul on the streets of Jerusalem is as the inveterate Judaizer. As the willing agent of the Sanhedrin, he had gone about uprooting the Church as a wild boar uproots a vineyard. He commanded the secret police, he regulated the spies, directed the night raids, dragged into

prison. He gave himself completely to the huge Jewish error which blocked his and their whole perspective of history.

Saul was only a boy, probably not more than fifteen years old, when he entered the school of Gamaliel; and he must have been only in his middle twenties when he assumed the rôle of chief persecutor of the Nazarenes. According to Harnack and others, when he was converted just one year after the death of Jesus, he was just thirty years of age. Paul, then, began his Christian career at the same age at which Jesus closed His. He was martyred at the age of sixty. His Christian career lasted about thirty-five years. For seventeen years following his conversion he had confined himself to a limited field, with three years at Damascus, and fourteen years in Tarsus and Antioch, in Cilicia and Syria. All that we have from his pen he wrote in about ten years. He was fifty years old before he wrote his epistles. For twenty years following his conversion he had written nothing, but during that time he had been thinking out his message and forming the strong convictions which he gave the world when he did write. Paul himself tells us that after three years (reckoning from the time of his conversion) spent in meditation in his Arabian retreat, that he went up to Jerusalem and spent fifteen days with Peter and James, the brother of Jesus.¹ His purpose, he tells us, was to "visit" these "pillar" apostles of the Lord, but the strong word he uses is better translated "to cross-examine" them. Paul was making sure of his foundations. He was subjecting his experience of Christ to the historical test. This trip denotes visits paid to places of interest with a view to getting information about them on the spot.

But the apostle to the Gentiles was still to wait a dozen years before beginning his active career as an apostle. At first no Church could afford to shelter him; his presence was a menace. His old associates had become his undying enemies. When he returned to Damascus he had to be smuggled out of the country. He was a man marked out for

¹ Gal. 1:17-19.

assassination. So he spent several peaceful, growing years at Tarsus.

II

It was politics, and not religion, that had killed Jesus; He met death because He refused to be a political Messiah. It was also a political squabble that led to the death of Stephen. In both deeds the priests had been the prime movers. Behind the rended priestly garments of Caiaphas was a political passion. Behind the martyrdom of Stephen was a political passion. Saul held his garments while protesting politicians cast the stones. Saul in his youth was a man of generous and lovable instincts. But he was also a man of large egotism, and such men are liable to deeds of violence which altogether misrepresent them. So it was with Saul.

Saul, and the Jews generally, believed in a destructive, overturning, warring Messiah, a kind of golden Mars, who would wrench the power from Cæsar and restore David's line in the glory of a re-established Zion. They looked for a helmeted Messiah in shining armour, not a thorn-crowned prophet on a cross. This victim of the accursed cross was another impious pretender. That His followers should dare to claim Him Israel's Messiah was a thought maddening to the orthodox. It was the supreme heresy; and heresy to the ecclesiastical mind is the unforgettable sin. Saul was standing with the orthodox and the ecclesiastical minded. They battered Stephen's body to a bleeding mass, believing, once more, as in the case of the execution of Jesus, that they did God's service, works of supererogation which would count as merit for them.

Jesus' death had raised an aggressive young Church to champion His views. This precipitated the temple ecclesiastics into violent persecution of the new Way, and had incidentally transformed Saul from a brilliant and obscure student to the leader of a strong religious party. Saul was the rising hope of these unbending religious Tories among the

Jews. To him they came, confident that they had gotten the reason for their proposed actions from the top of Mount Sinai; proudly did they set forth Moses as their authority—all of which Saul believed, or wanted to.

Little do they suspect the immense capacities for changing his mind that are latent in the bright and earnest young rabbi. Nor did *he* suspect it, either—now.

He is the young fanatic eager for the fray. So off to Damascus he bounds. Word has come of a growing sect of the Christians there. He is charged by the Sanhedrin to make an end of them: this he intends to do. The doubts which had stung his heart under the spell of the bewitching Stephen are all gone. Says one commentator, “Nero may have been cruel, but Saul beat him in thoroughness.” What but a cataclysm can subdue this burning mind; a cataclysm or a miracle of peace?

The journey to Damascus generally took a week. It was about one hundred fifty miles. The most direct route, which it seems certain Saul took, leads across interminable stretches of desert east of Hermon. All was silent as the grave as he rode toward the crisis of his fate, no human life was visible under the searching rays of the quivering white light.

Then presto! something happens; something revolutionary. Saul turned a white, blank face from side to side; he was blind, stone blind. The shock had destroyed his sight. He was struck to stone, petrified with fear; tremulously he asked, when he had pulled himself together, “Who art thou, Lord?” and in the next breath, “What wilt thou have me do?”

The Great War has given us instances of the temporary loss of eyesight from shock. Saul will regain his sight in part; but he will never have good eyes again. After Damascus he never knew what good eyes were; but the light that never was on sea or land had shone into his heart. Here was a knot of proud strength struck down into a helpless dependence. “Who art thou, Lord?” Instantly, that

undercurrent of tendency making toward Christianity in him asserted itself. But his position was critical. What would he do? He was haunted by a strange medley of past and present memories. He went off to Arabia. And when he returned, he was possessed of the root ideas of his future Gospel.

To say just what happened to Saul on the Damascus road is not easy. Students of the mind have been delving into this question ever since it took place. Renan imagined that he was caught in a storm while passing along the Lebanon mountains and was lightning-struck; that this produced in his active brain an ophthalmic fever which, for the time being, blinded him, and affected his eyes the rest of his life. That he was blinded by a light exceeding the brightness of the sun, we know. That he suffered from acute ophthalmia, or weak eyes, thought by many to be what he had in mind when he spoke of his "thorn in the flesh," from which he never seemed to recover, we also know. That the dazzling light of the desert inflamed his eyes we do not doubt, as many a traveller in the Orient can testify; but that Paul's inner transformation was caused by a stroke of lightning is too unconvincing to deserve notice. At all events, Saul was unhorsed, and in more than just the literal sense; he was unhorsed psychologically and spiritually; he was converted. But we shall not so much explain his conversion as simply to illustrate it. For that he experienced a complete conversion, his subsequent deeds prove.

Paul's conversion was purely of an inward character. With some, outward things, like the world of nature, take on a new glory; not so with Paul. His was a change in the region of the spirit; within his soul a new presence had arisen, what he himself called "a shining in the heart." It was on the Damascus road that the "pneuma" first broke through, the Spirit, which is not of man but from God, "which blows whither it lists, and kindles what it wills, and whose 'prick' was already felt in Paul's heart."² It is

² Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, p. 230.

an experience at which the mere rationalist has always stumbled. He either offers some sort of plausible psychological "explanation," or goes a step further and says that such a thing never occurred at all. It is hard to explain bodily hunger to one who has never experienced it. But to one who has known hunger it is easy. Since the big thing in Paul is his religious experience, experience is the key to an understanding of Paul. Now an experience of this kind is a purely private and personal affair, as private and personal as the toothache. One cannot make another know what the toothache is like unless that person has had it. Just so, whoever knows anything of the Spirit, whoever has felt the Spirit active in his own Christian consciousness, readily understands Paul's vision of Christ. He carries within himself the key to the truth of the matter. It is a mystical and spiritual apprehension of the truth, and is beyond all reach of agnosticism or rationalism.

III

It is customary to name certain underlying "preparations" for this spiritual upheaval in the life of Saul, such as his disappointment with the Jewish Law, the persecution of the Christians, and his own growing sense of lack. But I feel that Stephen's vision must be given chief place as a factor in his conversion. In spite of the difficulty in analyzing the Damascus-road experience, let us pause with it for a little.

If we keep in mind that before setting out from Jerusalem, Saul, with others, had listened to a remarkable address delivered by Stephen before the Sanhedrin, it will help to account for this great experience. Something in the manner, perhaps his certainty of faith, as well as the deadly logic of his speech, touched a deep chord in Saul's nature. From that hour he was profoundly disturbed. And although he had in his possession letters from the religious authorities of the temple, he grew more and more troubled as he journeyed.

In his address, Stephen had let fall a great revolutionary

idea—an idea which, though he must have tried to do so, Saul could not quite put from his mind. "On the way this idea," to borrow the words of another, "continued to clarify itself until suddenly it burst forth in all its majesty, in a light above the brightness of the sun, in a voice that sent him bound by the spirit to save the Gentile world."³

In a real sense, then, Saul's conversion must be attributed to Stephen. His great address, which was a "recital of Israel's historical failure in spirituality," is unmatched for point and power anywhere in the New Testament. Stephen charged that true religion had perished in devotion to the temple. In her devotion to the forms and symbols of religion Israel had lost her way and had become the murderer of the prophets, including Christ the Messiah. Now that she had killed her true Messiah, she, adding crime to crime, sought to kill all His followers. Saul, who stood by holding Stephen's clothes, had gone here and there "laying waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committing them to prison."⁴

The furious Jews would hear him no more; they stuck their fingers into their ears and madly rushed upon him; they bore him without the gates of the city and there stoned him to death; "stoned Stephen, calling upon God and saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' And kneeling down, he cried, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' And when he had said this he fell asleep."

"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."—The prayer and the picture of Jesus alive in heaven stuck in Saul's imaginative mind. If Stephen could see Jesus in heaven, perhaps he might, too, and he half wished he might. Well, he did. Surely one cannot see a vision he is not prepared to see. Saul of Tarsus was eminently prepared to have such a vision of Jesus as Stephen had, and such a vision of Christ in glory as he himself got. For, as he trudges across Syria, which

³ Van Buskirk, *The Saviours of Mankind*, p. 410. The Macmillan Company. Used by permission.

⁴ Acts 8:3.

the sun smites with an iron hand, more and more he felt within something of his midday fierceness and disturbing intensity. His soul curdles within his body, his immortal elements seem to eclipse his mortal, and he is face to face with realities unearthly.

IV

After the Damascus episode, Paul's soul was all plowed up with the sense of sin and guilt and misdirection. He had been living according to the Law, and—but for his recent persecution of the Christians—a good, correct outward life, not aimless, but to no sure purpose. Henceforth he will not know the torpor of a foul tranquility; his soul is delivered unto war.

For a time Paul had become one with Jerusalem's proud ecclesiastics whose lives were the sign of Israel's forgotten mission and the proof of their spiritual decay. Patriots they were, but narrow, nationalistic, intolerant.

But as Paul became more and more Christian he became timeless, raceless, and to some extent, creedless. Finally he saw that in order to become a world religion, Christianity must drop its Jewish clothes and put on a Gentile garment. His conjunction with Christ had the effect of opening within him undreamed of capacities of intercourse with that whole new world of light and thought known as the realm of spiritual reality. Christ shot through his darkness with unexpected light. His first initiation into light came like the sudden onrush of an unexpected bolt. Gradually more light reached his soul by a direct inner way—"the soul's east window of divine surprise," as Rufus Jones, the Quaker, would say. For one thing, God used humble Ananias to give immediate supplemental light.

Conversion, whether of the gradual or sudden order, is an experience full of change for the converted. For Paul it was that happy crisis by which his life was transformed and the gates within his being flung open toward the ideal life. He felt what formerly he did not feel, and saw what formerly

he did not see. No longer did he have the estranged soul that missed the "many-splendoured thing."

But Paul's conversion might have been of a quieter order, as countless many have been, and been no less genuine. Many have become lifelong devotees of the Way upon whom no dazzling light, like the Damascus vision, ever broke, many who live a high-powered life, because from day to day a thousand star-like illuminations fill their sky, and because they are all the time recipients and transmitters of spiritual energies far beyond themselves.

As for Paul, he was anything but a weak person to begin with, but he felt "strength from somewhere added to his native stock of endurance." A power not his own flowed in; and suddenly, he felt his soul garrisoned anew with a peace that overpassed comprehension. To be sure, he was a forceful person before he met Christ—not built, as Glover well says, to be neutral or even moderate—but he was vastly more forceful afterward. For just as a stronger personality, playing upon a weaker, can uplift it high above itself, and endow it with greatness and glory in no way native to itself, so had Christ enhanced Paul. Christ, as no one else in history, has the power to make men feel that they must rise and walk more nobly. Lived alongside Christ's life, ours cannot be mean.

Conversion, however, did not lessen Paul's problems; it probably created more. Nor did it alter his essential nature. The old "stuff" that was Saul of Tarsus was assuredly still there, but as the psychologist would say, reorganized, sublimated, raised to a new level. He was given a new outlook on the universe and on life, gifted with new capacities, had his nature shot through with new powers, so that a watershed was crossed, an epoch was begun. He often felt now what Whittier expressed in the words:

*"So sometimes comes to soul and sense
The feeling which is evidence,
That, somewhere, near about us lies
The realm of spiritual mysteries."*

By his conversion, Paul was swept into a life of high-powered efficiency; not only this, but during his subsequent career he was instrumental in changing many lives from low-powered efficiency to high-powered efficiency for the Kingdom of Christ. The girlish, timid Timothy is a notable example.

Who can say that his conversion was not a creative experience? That he was not subsequently a new Paul? His life took on new depth. His personality became more unified and coherent. Life became more equal. His spiritual nature was fructified. His character fortified for standing the world better; in Christ his native attitude toward that which constitutes life had been refashioned. He was a man of genius whom the historical Jesus had swept out of his old into a new orbit of thought and living. To Paul, Jesus was no story in a book, but the most vital, real, starry happening on the planet. At first he had been of a fiery, explosive nature. But taken through the fires of a transforming experience with Christ, he emerged blade-like, tempered and sweetly refined.

If he ever had been a victim of utilitarian morality, he has got past it now. As never before, there was rising in his soul the sense of "ought." Behind this was his sweet sense of mystical relation with Christ. In one of his profoundest words he says, "Christ lives in me." That certain spot on the Damascus road was the beginning of the unique career of the Christ-indwelt Paul.

v

Perhaps the most remarkable spiritual phenomenon in the New Testament is the God-consciousness of Jesus. And it is not too much to say that next to it, and akin to it, is the Christ-consciousness of Paul. Jesus could say, "No man knoweth the Father save the son, and he to whomsoever the son willeth to reveal him." And Paul could say, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me."⁵ No man in history ever rendered

⁵ Gal. 2:20.

such perfect obedience to God as Jesus, and none ever gained such a consciousness of God. And, no man ever rendered such perfect obedience to the mind of Christ as Paul, and none ever gained such a consciousness of Christ.

Damascus was the day-dawn in the Christ-consciousness of Paul. The light that had been filtering through into his troubled soul since the stoning of Stephen, which had been gathering on the horizon of his life, was beginning to break and spread, far and clear, over all his sky. This was the first crisis-hour of the spiritual process that had been going on for some time. And, just as we cannot account for the life of Christ apart from His God-consciousness, neither can we account for the career of Paul apart from his Christ-consciousness.

Paul's haunting Christ-consciousness was followed, quickly, as in the case of Isaiah's awakening in the temple, by an impelling vocation-consciousness. This, in turn, was followed by what we may call a servant-consciousness that was lifelong. For him, henceforth, the essence of Christian living was self-donation, self-expenditure, ungrudging self-sacrifice. The communion of Jesus with God is the secret of His wonderful life. And the communion of Paul with Christ is the secret of his. Both were spiritual geniuses.

Paul talks of Christians being in Christ just as the whole New Testament speaks of God being in Christ. He had been "in the flesh," "in sin," "in the Law;" but now he is "in Christ." The two greatest mysteries of the Christian religion are, that God could be manifested in the flesh and remain God, and that man may enter into the Divine and yet remain man! but they are true. All he teaches about the new man is traceable to experience.

Man struggles to outgrow himself; both his science and his religion are proofs of this. With his material senses and his scientific instruments he stretches into space-time; with his intuitive insight and mystical perception he ranges the non-spacial, non-temporal world beyond space-time. This is a prophecy of what man in Christ is becoming—a nascent

being superior to the material or the mystical; one who need no longer be either materialist or mystic, but in the bewitching and glad phrase of Paul, a *new creature!* Conversion, in one sense, is arrival; in another, it is only a point of departure. Coronation does not make a king, nor ordination a minister. But whatever else it may be in its beginnings, conversion in its completion is harmony of personality.

VI

In the Christ of the Damascus road Paul found unity of spirit, purpose, life. Light had come, and with the coming of light, harmony. Ignorance had gone, and with the going of ignorance, discord. For the first time in his life he had achieved harmony of personality. His torn, warring spirit found oneness in a new self in Christ. He who comes to have—no matter how—a unified and integrated personality is a converted person. After Damascus, Paul was a one-thing person marching to the music of “this one thing I do.”

Whatever else took place within Paul, there had come to him a new idea; and nothing is so powerful as a new idea the truth of which has become sun-clear and self-evident to the possessor.

The supreme idea that came to Paul in connection with his conversion was a twofold one: That Christ was the Messiah of the Jews and the Saviour of the Gentiles, and that “Christ is the sole and universal religion of mankind. This was a new proposition so startling and so vast, so utterly beyond the imagination of other men, so completely different from Saul’s previous conceptions” as to be in itself a most revolutionizing conception.⁶ It was a sudden and stupendous expansion of many of his pre-conversion ideas. His idea of the true Church of God was expanded to include all races and men, an idea that fairly staggered him at first with its stupendousness. As Dr. Holmes says, his old idea of God was suddenly and enormously enlarged. His Jewish faith

⁶ See A. Holmes, *The Mind of St. Paul*, p. 198. The Macmillan Company. Used by permission.

did not extend the love of God as Father to all men. To any good Pharisee this was inconceivable, totally out of keeping with his patriotism, contrary to all his nature, training, and hope. The Jewish attitude—all along—and never more than now—was born of the assumption that they, the Pharisees in particular, were the sole possessors of most that was essential in religion. An alien could become a proselyte indeed, but he must entirely forget what he *had been* and become what *they were*. So Paul held until he met the Nazarene.

But Christ has outlawed all this; true catholicity of spirit emerges. None who truly understands the spirit of Christ can live to the plea that the whole of the truth of God is to be found in any one system of religion. Like his people, Paul had been possessed of the unconscious assumption that the Jews had a monopoly on truth. This bred intolerance toward those of another creed. It still does. This more than anything else caused the Jewish Church and nation to fall. Few things are more crippling to the Christian Church yet today than this very spirit. Later Paul saw clearly that it was this spirit that had wrecked the Jewish faith, and that it would as surely wreck the Church if not overcome; so he flung himself into the fight to liberalize, and to more thoroughly Christianize, the primitive Church. This, too, was a new revelation so startling in its magnitude, so ambitious in its scope, so assertive in its supremacy as to mark it out as being altogether unique.

The apostle now saw Jesus as the clearest fulfilment of Hebrew prophecy and came to envisage Him as the consummation of an agelong, historical development. He reread his Jewish Scriptures and saw everything tending toward Christ. He took Judaism and Christianity and wove them into one splendid seamless fabric. At first he saw only discrepancies between Christianity and Judaism, but he came to see them as shoots from the same stock.⁷

⁷ Romans 11:27.

It was only in this sense that Paul may be said to have been the real maker of Christianity. None of the other apostles before him had any conception of its universal scope. They remained Jews, though converted Jews. Christianity was not fairly launched until Paul was converted. He converted Christianity as much as Christ converted him. But to make Paul the founder of the Church, as some have done, is to make him greater than he was; it is far-fetched. The statement of John Haynes Holmes, "Christianity, as a matter of fact, stems from Paul and not from Jesus," is very much an overstatement of the historical truth. His too-confident "as a matter of fact," when set over against Jesus' "I will build my church," is too insubstantial to be convincing.⁸

In spite of the titanic achievements of the apostle to the Gentiles, there would have been no such movement as Christianity but for Jesus Christ. Paul could no more have created the Church than the scientist can create the germ of life. He could improve the Church once it was in existence just as the scientist can improve the human body which a power not our own has made. The startling claim is sometimes made that Paul was greater than Jesus. But compared to Jesus, Paul felt himself less than nothing, and humbly owned that whatever he was, was due to Christ. Says Dr. Foakes-Jackson, "Christianity stands or falls with Jesus. It is profoundly untrue to say that Paul made Jesus or gave Him an importance He would not otherwise have had. It is a literal fact that Jesus made Paul, and the greatness of the disciple is one of the chief miracles wrought by the Master."⁹

Paul was Christianity's greatest interpreter, its greatest missionary, its greatest theologian, but not its founder. He was greatest as an advocate of the religion of liberty in the spirit, which he conceived as the heart of the teaching of Christ. He was narrow enough to be deep, thus avoiding

⁸ Matt. 16:18.

⁹ *Life of St. Paul*, p. 281.

the shallows of thought; he was catholic enough to be broad, thus escaping the blight of intolerance. He was always the seer, a shrewd adapter, sometimes the ingenious opportunist, but never a syncretist. He had occasion more than once to shift his emphasis and alter his views, but he could adjust himself to the greatest changes without shaking the central foundations of his faith.

VII

This Man of Tarsus was hearing a voice—a voice that would not be hushed—telling him he must share his new self with the world. Like Jeremiah, there was a flame in his bones. He is heard to say, “woe is me if I preach not this gospel!”

This is preaching as it ought to be; preaching that breaks forth from the heart like lava from a volcano. A volcano speaks when the deeps below can contain themselves no longer; until the molten heart gets hot within, it stands silent, doing nothing; then it breaks out of bounds, sending its bursting, illuminating lava everywhere, arousing the sleepy, enthusing the lethargic. Paul and the Church did just that for that age, and “cast a lunar rainbow on minds desperate with fatigue.”

In transforming a scholar like Paul, Christianity demonstrated its power to take not only cringing serfs—such as were three-fourths of the Roman peoples—and make them over into towering men: it proved its power to change men of prideful will and lofty bearing into patient Cross-bearing disciples of the Way.

To say that Jesus was prince of religious radicals is hardly an exaggeration; and Paul second only to Him. Carlyle's definition of religion as an heroic form of living, fits Paul. Neitzsche, not noted for the sobriety of his statements, defined a hero as one “who serves a great cause in such a way that all consideration for himself is forgotten”—and uttered a word as sober as it is true. In Jesus, men see what happens when God finds full entrance into a

life: man finds entrance into the Divine. In Paul, we see what happens when Christ gains entrance into human character: the individual finds his fullest consecration to man's betterment.

Jesus and Paul were radicals; they broke precedents; set time-honoured customs at nought. They were the most powerful dissolvents of the traditions of the elders. But did not every good custom begin as a broken precedent? Is it not thus that helpful changes and all progress come? But if Paul and Jesus were nonconformists, revolutionaries, they did not tear down for the love of it, or uproot to see the dust of their doings. They demolished that they might build better. Said Disraeli, speaking of the English constitution, "I am a conservative to preserve all that is good in our constitution, a radical to remove all that is bad." Nothing more dangerous was intended by these greater ones of Disraeli's race in planting Christianity in the soul of Judaism.

For Paul, Law had been the discovering power—had shown him what he ought to do; but Christ was the enabling power—He supplied the motivation for doing. To will had been present with him, but how to carry into living deed what he willed—that he found only when he found Christ.

Only such motives as Christ can supply can sting us out of those shabby lesser ways of living. Are we content to live cheaply, tamely, unprotestingly? In the days of Paul's pharisaic life convention had dictated all he did. Then he marched in the utmost surveillance to hoary-visaged tradition. Now he is loose from those wellcharted shores; he has set sail upon an untraversed sea of adventure toward a totally new bourne. He is a certain harbinger of that "ship of sunrise" that had been stranded, but is now launched anew in Christ and the Christian movement.

It is a great transformation that we see taking place in the proud son of renowned Tarsus. Henceforth, he will have his hardest trials, but deepest peace, in preach-

ing the Christ who makes shining immortals out of dull ephemeralids.

VIII

After the Damascus-road cataclysm, though tamed and unhorsed, Saul was still in a state of chaotic unrest. So off to the solitudes of Arabia he went, determined to explore his new-found experience vortex and depth. Life full of new meaning—the meaning of which he did not yet really comprehend—was knocking at the door of his spirit; a wondrous virility of emotion had awakened in the soul of the fitful persecutor of the Way; he was standing, did he but know it, at the beginning of his greatest, most challenging epoch; he was at the close of his stormiest.

In Arabia, in the idyllic seclusion of this glorious district made sacred by Moses and the wandering Israelites twelve centuries before, Paul lived, for a while, beyond space and time; looking into the face of God and pondering the fate of men. It seemed that all earthly limitations had fallen from him. Henceforth he was crowned with heaven-inspired clear-sightedness. He was dead to sin and alive to Christ. Unlike the monks of the West, or the holy men of the East, he did not give himself up to penitence, mental morbidity or bodily mortification. There had begun in him the wonderful process of a mysterious death; for as Christ gained sway over him his sinful propensities were being obliterated.

Paul's sojourn in Arabia is but another confirmation of the saying that great dreamers are always precise; for, from his dreamings he went straight to their practical outworkings in everyday life. It is no picture of a gaunt, melodramatic desert ascetic that we get of Paul here. It is one of a prophet and scholar meditating, for the time being in the formative silences, as great spirits ever have, before setting forth to his life-task.

From this era of meditation Paul took up his work with a clear-burning purpose and undeviating will. He had a kindling prescience of a Kingdom to come, a Kingdom of

Christ. If he had groped in the twilight of the pre-conversion days, his three years in Arabia with the Ascended Christ were days of increasing light.

Perhaps there in the bleak solitudes and the far stretches which had nurtured and spoken to Moses, phantoms of the Christ of the Damascus road had appeared again and again to his vision. Damascus had given him peace but not rest; more than ever he was shot through with the "arrows of desire." If he grew sad at what seemed the progressive deterioration of humanity, he was formulating the remedy which would arrest it, heal it, and which he would set about applying. Without at all suspecting it, the vision plus his natural proclivities, are fast fitting him to become the Hercules of the young Church of the Nazarene.

Tarsus is the birthplace of Saul the Jew; Jerusalem the foster-mother of Saul the Pharisee; but Damascus is the birthplace of Paul the Christian. Because of that, Damascus is one of the holy places of the world. Not only is this the supreme moment in Paul's life, but as Frank H. Ballard has said: "It is one of the creative moments of the world's history." Many things that claim our attention pass with the day; many subjects are soon threadbare and out of date; but this supreme experience near Damascus of one who saw a light and came in touch with the absolute Spirit, is of perennial interest. It has been of more importance to history than the decisive battles of Marathon, Waterloo, or Yorktown. It was the most far-reaching event that ever happened in this oldest and most famous city of the world, and that is saying a lot.

The Man of Tarsus is face-forward at last on a new road, a road which will take him far. It is a road of battle full of many obstacles, but a road which leads at last to the heights. It shall be the purpose of the next chapter to survey the road and portray the battles.

VI

HIS SOUL'S BATTLE-ROYAL

IF we could find some way to make the skull of a person's head transparent," says Rufus M. Jones, "so that we could look through all the coverings and see the cortex of the brain, and if still further we could magnify the brain cells and could see the molecular process operating there, we could on occasion plot out some very interesting brainstorms and cyclone vortexes in the grey matter of our friends. It would be more interesting entertainment to watch the storm waves in our neighbour's brains than it now is to hear radio vibrations from a broadcasting station."¹

If at the time of his crisis on the Damascus road, the brain of Saul could have been thus observed, one must surely have witnessed one of the most terrific "brainstorms" that ever swept the mind of man. This was the most decisive battle the Man of Tarsus ever fought; for him, it settled many issues, and did not need to be fought again. But while this was true, before his race was run, he was destined to fight many another fierce battle, both of an inward and outward character.

The Jewish nation gave the world the finest type of religion it had before Christ came, but all the while that same religion was nourishing a viper in its bosom; that viper was the Jewish priesthood with its stanch insistence on ceremonial.

I

There was, then, first the outward conflict with the em-

¹ *The New Quest*, p. 150. The Macmillan Company. Used by permission.

battled priests and Pharisees in the old camp which he had forsaken, and with the Judaizing Christians—those within the Church who wished to impose on all Christians the outward forms of the Law.

When, after years of absence in Arabia and Syria, Saul returned to Jerusalem, he saw as many cold backs as formerly he had seen friendly faces. He was beginning to realize that the gilded glories of the world are short-lived, ephemeral. He had been a fervid Pharisee, but his heart was now in the other camp. He was not long in coming to loggerheads with the Sanhedrin, who swiftly put the screw to their erstwhile comrade. His bosom friends had become wheedling intimidators.

Small men take their revenge on greatness—where there is the smallest chance—by soiling it, but if no chance, by misrepresentation or stolid opposition. The antipathy of the Rabbis toward Paul was that which narrow natures and envious hearts feel toward masterfulness in a man of genius. They were righteous, fanatically righteous men, but men whom no experience could teach.

In short, the Jewish Church had long since come to an end spiritually. It had died of its own iniquities.

Not a few times in history have governments, civil and ecclesiastical, been too decayed to reform; but always they have been the most persistent in keeping up the forms, though the spirit and power have gone out of them. Paul was thoroughly acquainted with the mental climate of his day. He was able to distinguish between those steady trade winds of thought which had blown constantly for centuries and those temporary squalls of extreme opinion which make spectacular eddies but which are soon outmoded and die without having influenced anything. In espousing Christ he knew that he was not taking up with something transient or temporary.

His was the case of a Pharisee of the vigorous sort turned against all Pharisees. He had completely—so it seemed to his former companions—cast his Jewish skin and assumed

the rôle of Christian crusader. He had left them at the first, wearing the regalia of a Jerusalem rabbi, impersonating in himself the authority of the temple ecclesiastics; he came back having professedly put on Christ as a garment, talking of visions and voices vouchsafed unto him by the glorified Jesus as the evidence of his apostleship.

But to cross swords with such opponents was as dangerous as it was daring; it was as prophetic of trouble for Paul as it had been for Jesus. If for Christ it had meant the Cross, what might it not mean for Paul? Was success against them to be hoped for? Time would tell. Against the huge avalanche of their protesting voices and opposing wills Paul stood nothing daunted. He had crossed his Rubicon. He would now lead the Christian hosts as he had first led those who were bent on destroying them.

At the news of Paul's conversion the Rabbis tweaked their bushy eyebrows in wonderment. It was odd that their chief huntsman had turned the trap on them. At first, they were inclined to despise, rather than fear, Paul. As little could a wasp hurt an elephant, thought they. But the marked success with which he subverted their ancient tenets and made converts to Christ amazed them. They saw the peril. They were chagrined. A gulf like a gigantic yawn was stretching between them and the Tarsan. His act had put cold oceans between them. Against him they were like rubber, impervious and resisting. More and more Jerusalem was becoming a forest of antipathies. Paul, while enjoying the sheltering protection of the Hebrew eagle's wings, had plotted against his feathers. Plainly a struggle was on; a struggle between rigidity and change, between grey old Jerusalem and the peoples, between Judaism and the Church.—And it was war to the hilt.

It takes a bold man, if not a reckless one—some would say a traitor—to throw TNT downstairs in his own house. But this Paul had done. He kept thundering away at the insufficiency of the Law for salvation. Thus had he put his finger in the rent in Judaism's armour.

The Rabbis put their heads together; they connived ways and means of exterminating all Christians. What of this Paul? They had prized his zeal and enlisted his aid; now they held him a trimmer, a turncoat, apostate. Their sense of pride was stung to desperation. As Paul preached Christ their resistance became oceanic and ceaseless.

II

Mention has been made of the Judaizers who were little more than Pharisees abroad—funnels of tradition with the simple orthodoxy of the sheep, whose religious opinions were as pedantic as their lives were abstemious. For twenty years they dogged the steps of Paul everywhere he went.

But Paul's faith in Christ had put behind him the most comprehensive and compelling motive that can sway a soul—the consciousness of obeying the eternal will. Once flesh rode spirit, now spirit rides flesh. Love possessed him as hate possesses some other men. His whole nature, as if by some rejuvenation, had suddenly expanded. He had taken up the cause of Christ never to lay it down.

The Judaizers both feared and violently disagreed with him; never wearied in discrediting, embarrassing, or hampering him in his work. More than once the apostle felt the pain of the lacerations from his flesh at the hands of the Roman lictors, but the stings of the venomous tongues of the Judaizers hurt him more than these. They seized with avidity anything that would make him odious, so deep was their animosity.

When to envy there is added enmity, misconceptions spawn like frogs in the warm slimy water of spring. In the heat of controversy the apostle said some cutting things about his enemies, but with more calmness later he referred to these unpleasant experiences as “perils among false brethren.”

But his earthly Jerusalem never softened toward him; through the years it nourished nothing but an implacable unfriendliness. Near the close of his life, not long before

his voyage to Rome and martyrdom there, he determined to return to Jerusalem. Some tried passionately to dissuade him, but Paul who, a resolution once taken, moved as swiftly and as surely as the Roman eagles which he never ceased to admire. After warnings from friends along the way and a prophet, he arrived in the ever-seething Holy City and went into the temple. No sooner was he seen within the holy precincts than a violent insurrection was stirred up. Adding treachery to insurrection, they formed a plot to kill Paul. Presently he found himself surrounded by his enemies. Soon he was standing looking into their shifty eyes fiercely defending himself and preaching Christ. Theirs was the sure enmity of the orthodox and the strait-laced. Paul could hardly be called a humourist, but the most dangerous occasion found him calm and sometimes nimble-witted; very shrewdly he turned certain of his foes into friends, splitting them into rival groups, and so eliminating himself for a time as the centre of contention. The trick probably saved his life, but it did not end the trouble. From the High Priest comes the command to smite Paul on the face. From the retort he made, we are justified in feeling that the dumpy little man suddenly stiffened, his eyes blazing furiously, while there stirred in his heart the confused feeling and wrath that makes the animal start up when unexpectedly wounded. His swift rejoinder fairly blisters: "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall!" Recall Jesus' characterization of the rulers as "whitened sepulchres." With all his former experiences with Annas, as a former member of the Sanhedrin and as a persecuted leader of the Christians, he did not know till now with what a venomous snake he played. Paul let dogs do what they pleased so long as they merely barked and did not use their teeth, but when they bit he sometimes bit back. Paul was astonished. His words in this connection indicate surprise. His meaning cannot be that he did not know the High Priest, for he knew him well; but rather, "I did not know that the High Priest would act so." A slap on the

mouth was the deepest insult that one could receive. Hence Paul's anger and his surprise at the action of the ecclesiastic.

Again Jerusalem was a forest of antipathies. The apostle had to be spirited away from the angry city by Roman soldiers. He was imprisoned at Cæsarea, where for three years he lingered while justice languished.

All this resolves itself into the old tussle between prophet and priest, the Jewish Pharisee and the Christian apostle. The Pharisee banned the apostle, but not the apostle the Pharisee. His was the attitude expressed in Edwin Markham's lovely quatrain:

*"He drew a circle that shut me out—
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in."*

III

But fierce as were his *outward* battles—the battles he fought, as he tells us, with "beasts," *i. e.*, beast-like men, at Ephesus, at Philippi, at Jerusalem, the many cities of the Empire, and finally at Rome—these were not the worst battles he fought. The opposition from without was persistent and strong, but there were alien forces *within* which were more dreadful. These hampered and thwarted him in a thousand ways. When he would do this, they blocked the way; when he would have that, they said him nay. Within us all there is a man with which we must deal. We must look to that Power not ourselves and greater, to control and tame that which impedes and hinders us. His constant prayer was:

*"Oh for a man to arise in me
That the man that I am may cease to be."*

None knew better than Paul that a sword divides soul from body in man; that there is, to change the figure, a wide gulf between these into which the passions of the

physical life sow the seeds that grow into trees of conflicting desires. If there are men who are born good, who are good in their blood, Paul was not one of them. He had a struggle to be good. No man ever felt temptation more fiercely, or from the pressure of temptation has sent up cries of stronger agony. He felt called upon to buffet his own body and keep it under. How keenly he felt the duality of our nature! To him the struggle between the divine and the devilish was no fiction. These two armed contestants within he calls "flesh" and "spirit." He was a shrewd analyzer of souls—of his own first and most persistent of all.

The disharmony Paul felt within himself is expressed in the seventh chapter of Romans. Psychologists explain this as the uprush of our blindly instinctive and primitive life persisting in us—those strong impulses of our psychic past carried over from archaic times, and still capable of taking charge when we are off our guard. This primitive passion (Paul's "flesh") has bitten hard into the plastic stuff of man's life. But our rational self rises to correct and control the vigorous primitive impulse.

His immortal analysis of the soul in its duality might well serve as the autobiography of every man. Goethe had this in mind when in *Faust* he made his hero say that he had two souls within him, one lifting him aloft and the other dragging him down. Few truths are so woven into the warp and woof of the great literature of the world as this "symphony of flesh and spirit."

The difference between this seventh and eighth chapters of Romans, is the difference between Jew and Christian; the Jew lived in externals, the Christian lives a life of the spirit. Paul had been first the Jew, then the Christian; he was flesh, but is now spirit. He will later make a similar distinction in the spirit life of believers, where to the half-Christians in the Corinthian Church he writes: "And I, brethren, was not able to speak to you as to spiritual, but as to carnal, *sarkical*, as to babes in Christ. Milk I gave you to eat, not meat: for not yet were ye able. But not

even now are ye able; for ye are yet sarkical, *i. e.*, fleshly: for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not sarkical, and walk according to men? For when one says, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not men?"² They are really not Christian, not spiritual, but fleshly, just "men." To a Church eager for miraculous gifts, desirous of making a show of knowledge, Paul would show that nothing is Christian, unless love inspires it. Those who desire to know Christ by some other way than that of immediate personal nearness and communion cannot truly know Him at all. The glory of Christ is a glory that transforms men into the image and nature of Christ Himself. Then, and not till then, can one say that Jesus is his Lord, for "no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit."

But Paul distinguishes two stages in the sonship of Christians. They have already received sonship, yet are still waiting and hoping and working toward it in that fulness which only their resurrection can bring.³

IV

Man occupies a paradoxical position in two worlds, flesh and spirit, body and soul; he is an actor who must act a single rôle in two dramas. But these two are one in his experience; they are not juxtaposed simply, they are merged. The subjective and the objective, the celestial and the earthly mingle themselves in the life of both seer and sinner throughout the entire course of his life. As to his ideal, he is perfection itself; as to his outer life, he is imperfection. Both are experiences equally real.—Body not more than soul, and soul not more than body. If he denies the outer he becomes a mystic; if he denies the inner he becomes a materialist. Neither makes a full-orbed man. The well-rounded man is neither angel nor animal, he is an animal-angel. Paul felt himself caught and torn on the horns of

² I Cor. 3:1-4.

³ Rom. 8:14-17.

this dilemma and cried, "Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?"

He felt the point and poignancy of the Psalmist's cry, "My soul cleaveth unto the dust." But man cannot lay hold on the dust and be content. This cleaving to the dust is all very real, but that is only half the picture. "My soul cleaveth unto the dust; quicken thou me according to thy word."—That is the other half. If man is an angel in the dirt, he is yet an angel. True, he cleaves to the dust, but he also aspires to the heights. If with one hand he fingers the mud, with the other he reaches after the stars. If I could take my soul and utterly scrub out from it the face of God, I might have apart from God a certain kind of peace; but it would be the peace of death. But what is more, I cannot do it. The hogs may be content with the pigsty in the far country; but not the Prodigal. Man is that prodigal. He was not made for that. He cannot blot out the memory of his Father; is persistently tormented by the thought of home; is made miserable by the dreams of his finer possibilities.

In this outer world, as Dwight Bradley, in his thoughtful book, *The Recovery of Religion*, has so well said, man finds himself to be both at home and abroad. His body is happily at home in it, but his soul is not, it dwells as a stranger here. "Yes, man's body is of the objective world, and to the objective world it belongs alone!"—but his soul is away from home, caught, held, enslaved here by the body to do duty in space-time—and who shall say why?—until such time as the body shall decay, crumble, and release it.

With what skill did Paul paint the picture of the pull-back of sin in his nature and the pull-forward of his better self to high spiritual destiny! How hot, at times, was the conflict between the buried Titan and the emerging Christ! But in the strength of Christ he set about harnessing his fiery energies to the service of light. Even his explosive conversion had not wholly uprooted the "root of evil" within him.

Perhaps it is not so much a matter of uprooting anyway, as one of sublimation. The work begun by conversion must be continued and completed in the fixation of habits and the steadfast training of the mind toward Christ. Conversion, whatever else it may be, is harmony of personality. For spiritual achievement there must be such harmony, for only when the whole man acts together, can we rise to the top of our powers. This is what began with Paul on the Damascus road, but it was subsequently carried through to completion amid many inner and outer conflicts. This alone explains Paul's superhuman achievements, which his devastating trials, including the ever-piercing "thorn in the flesh," could but little impede. Here was a volcanic energy redirected and Christ-directed; and such in degree is every true Christian conversion.

Religion, to Paul, was man's greatest boon; life's liberator and its jailer, too. It was repression and release; best of all, it was fulfilment. Too long he had been a personality truncated and incomplete; but now he knows liberty, expansion, release. It was life, the incentive to live, to live adequately, which he now possessed. His soul, smothering, had broken through to freer air. The new wine would not stay in the old wine-skins. New truth had come, and with the coming of new truth, his soul must get new room. He had moved out into a world-view where life had room, horizons, and abiding significance. Not only was it the expulsive power of a new affection, but the expansive power of a developing religious life. There was growth, enlargement, release. It has been said that religion at its best is a "mind-stretcher." Quite often it has become a prison cell. Religion is not a cramping of life, but its completion. Paul found it so. His feet walked in new shoes, his mind moved in new ideas, but there was none of the uneasiness which customarily accompanies these. He was a liberal because he had been liberated.

Man does not reach, as a rule, without much effort and suffering the higher levels of his psychic being.

While Paul caught something of the eternal sadness that sounds forever on the shores of human life, there was nothing dull or lumpish or bucolic about the man. He gives evidence of amazement at the dullness of the irreligious life, could not understand how people endure it. While multitudes around him pottered about their aimless nothings, he was running a race for a prize.

This question of merit suggested by his use of the word "prize" is an interesting one. As a Pharisee, he took his religion very seriously, as all profoundly religious persons do; then the acquisition of merit was his single goal. But Paul the Christian is more concerned about pleasing God and serving mankind than he is about acquiring merit; although it must be admitted that the thought of merit or reward in the best sense, was a strong factor in his Christian career—if not, indeed, one of the reasons for the amazing vigour of it. And why not? In what sense can it be said that keen interest in "treasures laid up in heaven" is a sign of meanness? The Pharisaic religion was a religion of merit; that of the surrounding pagan world one of magic; but Paul's new faith in Christ was principally a religion of mercy.

For him, great Christian that he was, life was appetizing, exciting, full of adventure with nothing of boredom in it. There was no place in his thinking for the modern silly notion that religion is something weak, unbearable by any one with red blood in his veins. Paul was a Christian because he was courageous. The reason many of his time were not, was because they dared not. Religion costs more than most people are willing to pay. So they talk down at what they dare not be. The motto of the Emperor William I. of Germany was, "Do what you should and bear what you must."—A sentiment not exactly popular in any age, and far from it in our ease-loving day. It was more faithfully adhered to by the apostle to the Gentiles than by the Emperor of the Germans.

Paul's life was "an epic expression of deed, conflict, and conquest." He felt himself engaged in a personal war against the powers of evil—powers in the air, above, below, around, and within him. He felt himself facing the direct opposition of Satan. Now he is fighting desperately with his lower nature which sometimes, says he, batters and mauls him badly; now it is against "principalities and powers" of the external world. But from all scrimmages he arises unstunned in spirit; sees Christ victor. He may have his moments of human relapse, but for him all fearsome things, human or superhuman, have lost their fearsomeness.

To sum up and conclude this study of Paul's conflicts, let it be said that the bodily urges, emotions and passions, which are rooted in instinct, and called by him the "flesh," while they are ever at war with the ideal and the higher life generally, have been conquered. Until he knew Christ he was mastered and controlled by these, but now he masters them. He is accompanied by an Invisible Companion, haunted by the sense of an Ideal Spectator, and his appetites, instincts, emotions, and passions are controlled—that is, lifted higher, organized and sublimated.

Throughout the whole of his religious life he had prayed the prayer, "Unite my heart to fear thy name." His sadly divided soul had startled him at the stoning of Stephen; it had been the cause of his opposition to Christ; even as a Christian it had wrung from his soul the bitter cry, "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me?" But he has become unified to adore the name of Christ. In Christ he has found the whole of himself; life has grown purified, refined, spiritualized. His is a life harmonized, a personality unified, a man made whole. Happiness is the child of harmony. When the various and discordant impulses of the soul and the varied forces of the personality are brought under the domination of some great central control; when the warring elements of the soul are captured by some sublime enthusiasm; when one can say, "I, yet not I, but

Christ in me," he has achieved that inner peace which is the essence of happiness.

The apostle to the Gentiles is still to know the loneliness of genius, but Christ possesses and fires his lonely heart. His soul has grown into Christ, height nor depth, life nor death, can part them: they are inseparable, the Galilean and the Tarsan. At last he has found the true art of living; has peace, poise, power, rejuvenescence. He has reached that state of which Goethe sang:

*"All striving, all struggling
In eternal peace in God the Lord."*

Drudgery he might still know, but it would be drudgery mingled with dreams, for henceforth he was the dream-dominated Paul. Disillusionment he may know, but not in its baneful or damaging effects. Even in the end the picture we get of "Paul the aged" is a Paul serene of soul. The years have not left him bitter and spirit-spent.

*"He found life a pattern
Woven by the Law,
And men colourless threads in the fabric;
Save one,
Whose face shone
While jagged stones carved the last darkness,
And Another
Whose light and voice
Illuminated a desert road.
Thereafter, ..
Frail but unafraid,
He journeyed into the dawn—
Tearing the pattern into shreds
To free souls
From the tyranny of the dark."*⁴

⁴ *Paul*, by Earl B. Marlatt.

VII

MAN OF MANY JOURNEYS

IN this chapter I want us to think not only of the vast extent of Paul's missionary journeys—though we shall be doing that, of course—but of the constructive achievements of these. For these journeys took him not only over the *Ægean* and the Mediterranean Seas and their adjoining lands, but across the uncharted seas of human sin and hope as well, since out of them came his writings. While considering the rather amazing travels of the man, we shall continue to measure his outreach in the world of thought and spirit and his impact on the world of men and things.

The secret of Paul's amazing achievement does not lie in his mental power, his native spiritual energy, or his practical resourcefulness, much as they contribute. These would of themselves have been unavailing. The secret of his achievement lies in the vision of the Damascus road. It was this event which drew all his "broken bits of being" into harmony of personality and unity of effort. It was a violent conversion, which implies wrong education and a disintegrated self: for him and all such it was necessary.

This is the supreme factor in his achievement. But coupled with it is another: his uncanny ability to act at the opportune moment. The Roman world was agog with expectation: the Council at Jerusalem had spoken: its victor turned from Asia to Europe. It is no accident that Paul's missionary career coincides with a period in the Empire when "religion had blossomed into an eager longing for a new and satisfying faith." This "strategist of missions" knew what he wanted: he saw the circumstances of the

time: he was the brilliant opportunist, quick to take advantage of the chance to share with Jew and Greek and Roman the riches of Christ.

I

Paul's ideal of brotherhood had been born directly following the Damascus episode. Already he was dreaming of a day when

*"Man to man the world o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that."*

Jesus had been the first great Internationalist; through Him, Paul the second. To be sure, even in the Old Testament there are some gracious hints at internationalism. One prophet represents God as saying, "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance." The Book of Ruth is a difficult one for the narrow nationalist. Jonah strikes a staggering blow at harsh and narrow national prejudice. It tells of pagan sailors who were just and gracious gentlemen. It pictures the populous capital of the bloodiest race of the ancient world and the bitterest foe Israel ever had, Nineveh, repenting at the word of a prophet. It holds up to fierce scorn that same prophet who because of race hatred had to be chastised into taking them the message of the love of God.

But these are little more than splendid hints of an internationalism which did not exist. It was Paul (following Jesus) who took the universalism latent in his ancestral faith and dared to practice it toward the world. To the Apostle to the Gentiles the oneness of humanity was a dear theme.

*"There is neither Jew nor Greek,
There is neither slave nor free,
There is neither male nor female:
For ye are all one in Christ."¹*

¹ Gal. 3:26-28.

The enmity between nations is melted away in the full, free love which Christ begets in men, and the road to Christian internationalism is prepared. The first Christians were the world's first true democrats. With the word "brother" they stamped the most insignificant person with a value for eternity. This tended to beget a finer self-respect in the individual, which in turn, soon altered his social standing in society. Make the most abject slave feel that he has true worth, and at once you improve his conduct and win for him a worthier respect. It was this that finally altered the Empire of Rome from pagan to Christian allegiance. Even if it was but little more than a nominal allegiance, it was a revolution of the first magnitude.

Paul poured out his life in the struggle between the Christ-Way and the Cæsar-cult. To him more than to any other man does the Christ-Way owe its triumph over the Cæsar-cult. He so identified himself and his lot with the self and lot of Christ as to feel the sound-prints of Christ's passion branded on his life. His Christ-intimacy begot in him a Christliness which has never been excelled in any Christian's life. He made Christianity Christ-centred. But it has not always remained so. It would have been far better, most agree, if it had. For not Christianity, but Christ, is the hope of the world.

No student of Paul can miss the fact that he has a slave's sense of duty toward the world. He says:

*"We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ,
As though God were entreating by us:
We beseech you on behalf of Christ,
Be ye reconciled to God."*

He does all he does as under the gaze of the great Taskmaster's eye. Sometimes he talks as if he feels the hand of the Unseen pushing him:

*"Necessity is laid upon me!
Woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel."*

His ceaseless desire to Christianize was a propulsion ever rekindled in unbroken communion with Christ. He had a passionate and virile craving to extend the commonwealth of love. He was a powerhouse of intellect, a Niagara of emotions. These drove him onward at an ever more frenzied gallop. But he did not dream even yet, to what heights and what dire lengths his mission would lead him. His clearness of vision is matched by energy of action. No religious teacher ever took such giant strides as he. Few men ever had such faith in their appointed destiny. He combined the passive patience of the plant with the analytic spirit of the botanist.

Steeped in the generous spirit of the Nazarene, we see this naturally intolerant man more and more becoming all things to all men. Formerly he had looked at the world of men in their dire struggles through the ungenerous eyes of the Pharisee, but when he came to look afresh with the eyes of Christ, it was to pity and love, not to condemn, humanity. It was said of Leonardo that, though he was kind to persons, he was indifferent to humanity. Paul counted all men friends and held willingly with them the dear converse of equals. His is a fadeless lure for all the centuries. Had he not been as he was he could not have made the living appeal to the human heart which he has and does.

II

The three missionary journeys of the apostle not only trace the expansion of primitive Christianity, they reflect more than all else the expansion of the soul and personality of the man.

As a glance at the map will show, the first of these mission tours passed in a circle around the region of Cilicia, the part of the world most familiar to Paul and where he had already evangelized. In it was Antioch, a city of half a million people, third city of the Empire, the second capital of Christianity, Jerusalem being the first. From Antioch the First Missionary Journey was launched, and so began the "Christian Odyssey."

Antioch was really a great Oriental Greek city in an exaggerated way. It was vice incarnate, triumphant. In the pithy phrases of Renan, "it was an unheard of collection of jugglers, charlatans, pantomimists, magicians, sorcerers, and priestly imposters; a city of races, games, dances, processions, festivals, unchecked luxury. . . . It was like an opium-eater's dream, a stream of wild pleasure, delicately conceived, daintily dressed."

But it was in this "opium-eater's dream" that men were first called Christians, and from which Christianity began its march of empire. To Antioch Barnabas brought Paul from Tarsus, where he had gone after his return from Arabia. Here the Man of Tarsus launched his missionary career. Surely Antioch afforded a God-ordained opening for all his powers. The city challenged, interested, absorbed him. It was not long until the Church became a recognized movement with a name, or rather a nickname; and one cannot but feel that Paul, more than any other, was responsible for this.

The citizens of Antioch inquired, "whom does the Church worship, who is the Christians' god?" The answer was, "A Galilean called Christos." At once they made a pun on the name Christos and turned it into a nickname. The word Christos is much like Chrestos, which means worthy, but often with a touch of ridicule. Soon the people were dubbing the Christians "the goody, goody people, the awfully pious ones." Thus men were called Christians first at Antioch in Syria.

But Antioch was not only a centre of vice; it was the sphere of many minds. It was the beginning of religious strife, and the beginning of religious freedom. Jerusalem, the mother-city of Christianity, receded as the centre of authority, and each man fell back upon his own experience. As the river of Christian faith broadened, Jerusalem was left behind.

Three things determined the course of Paul's journeys. Difficulties in travel kept him close to the banks of the

rivers. He chose the more important cities where he could work at his trade. He followed the paths of trade and Jewish emigration; the synagogue offered him an easy outlet for his Gospel. His programme in a new place never varied much, "and the regularity with which the various acts of the drama developed," says Mackay, "would have utterly crushed the spirit of anybody else." He arrives in a city, the Jews give him a homelike reception. He finds work, and starts his cloth-weaving. When the Sabbath comes, Paul goes to the synagogue, everybody looks and wonders at him. At the close of the service the official gives the visitor a chance to speak. It is his opportunity. He arises and begins a sermon on the hope of Israel. It is just what everyone wants to hear. They are interested.

Then Paul tells the story of the resurrection of Jesus; he relates his own vision of Jesus alive; he declares He is the Messiah. The meeting breaks up in a storm. Paul is forbidden the synagogue. He takes to private houses, where he teaches the Jewish Christian and Gentile proselytes who flock to hear him. Then the whole place rises in arms against him. Sometimes he is mobbed and beaten, as at Lystra and Philippi, during the Second Journey. He gets into another city and begins in the same way, then another, and another. So Christianity spreads. But his Jewish enemies pursue him, warning the synagogues against him. Think of the martyrdom of such a life! No wonder he once said, "I die daily." He must certainly have died a hundred deaths before he was beheaded in Rome.

There was nothing professional about the apostle's speech, dress, or manner. He was just spiritually contagious. There was nothing officious about him. He worked as a man among men. He slipped quietly into a synagogue; he talked with sailors, slaves, or merchants; talked about and was interested in whatever interested them, and this he did not as a detached priest or sacred man, though he was conscious every moment of being the ambassador of Christ.

This First Journey included that other Antioch as well,

the Phrygian city called Pisidian Antioch. Antioch in Syria was the beginning of the tour, while Antioch in Pisidia was almost its close. It stood on a lofty range 3,600 feet above the sea. Here Paul's troubles all but overwhelmed him. It must be remembered that Barnabas and the young John Mark were his companions in travel. Before they arrived in the mountain city John Mark, upset at the courageous programme of Paul, and being a conservative Christian of the Jerusalem type, opposed to Paul's growing liberal attitude toward the Gentiles, quit the party and went back to Jerusalem. To him it looked like a hair-brained scheme of a hair-brained man. In addition to this, Paul fell seriously ill, some think from acute ophthalmia, or more probably, as Ramsay thinks, malaria. He could no longer travel, but worked from his house in the city.

But on a Sabbath, though so ill, and due to his illness, an object of contempt, he went into the synagogue. And when the opportunity was given the disease-ridden little preacher mounted the platform and delivered a most stirring sermon.

On the next Sabbath the whole city of Pisidian Antioch crowded the synagogue to hear Paul. It was the first full, free offer of the Gospel to the Gentiles. It held a momentous decision for Paul. He publicly proclaimed his turning to the Gentiles. The new Church would have dug out their eyes and given them to Paul, but the synagogue turned him out cold, beating him, it is thought, with forty stripes save one—one of the five times he was bastinadoed during his journeys—and so ill, too!

III

It must be remembered that, while Jesus was first in point of time to conceive of missions on a world scale, bidding His followers "go into all the world" with His Gospel, that it was Paul who was first to initiate such a programme on anything like world proportions. Moreover, in this Paul was as original as Jesus, since he could not have known at this early date of the missionary manifesto uttered by Jesus

and recorded in Matthew (unless he had heard it by word of mouth), for as yet none of the Four Gospels had been written.

These significant journeys initiating the first missionary enterprise of history were due, therefore, to the organizing genius and evangelistic passion of Paul. The movement was one of the greatest departures from the beaten paths of men in history. This, perhaps more than anything the apostle ever did, stamps him as an original genius. Not forgetting that Barnabas, Paul's companion in travel, was co-instigator of the first tour; that he supplied much of the inspiration and leadership of the movement in its beginnings, yet that Paul was the towering genius behind it, there can be little doubt. Barnabas was the older man and ranked at first as the leader. Then it was "Barnabas and Saul," but before the first tour was completed, Paul had forged ahead as the undisputed leader. It was now "Paul and Barnabas." And so to the end of these journeys and his journey of life, one name and one only dominated the Christian movement—Paul of Tarsus.

Paul and Barnabas came to Lystra, the city of Timothy. When they reached the Temple of Zeus-before-the-Gate there was a babble of Lycaonian ecstasy; all was plain. Zeus had himself visited his people; the tall, majestic, silent stranger was Zeus; and the heroic little man who did all the talking was Hermes, messenger of the god. They made ready to worship them, but they would have none of it. Their sad disillusionment was too much for them to enjoy. They mobbed Paul and Barnabas, leaving Paul for dead. Timothy came to bury Paul, but found him alive; he arose and re-entered the city. The next day Paul went thirty miles to Derbe!

The centuries have increasingly admired the adventuresomeness of that mission which made Christ favourably known. Paul was a torch illuminating the world with the light of Christ, a very "burning glass of God" to the nations.

By the time the Second Mission Tour is launched Paul has won the title by which the ages have known him, "the Apostle to the Gentiles." His subsequent travels will take him to all the great seats of Gentile influence. This second journey was a great expansion and extension of the first, embracing all the crowded centres and important cities of the Empire except Rome. It was one of the most remarkable adventures ever attempted; one that had abounded in thrilling incidents. It carried Christianity from the continent of its birth to the continent in which then resided the power of the world; and it was filled with what beginnings, what possibilities, what promises!

IV

It was near the beginning of the Second Journey that Paul visited Athens. Athens was the religious capital of the world until Christianity was established at Antioch and later at Rome. For a thousand years Athens never quite stopped beating as the heart of Greek civilization. It was holy ground and headquarters for philosophy. Here was the Academy of Plato, the Lyceum of Aristotle, the Porch of Zeno, and the Garden of Epicurus. Athens was the most religious city in the world, when Paul visited it. But faith and life had gone out of their stately forms. Life for them was beginning to lose its meaning; they were full of drab weariness. Paul preached and they laughed; they called him a "seed-picker," a slang Athenian term for a man who had picked up scraps of learning and chattered them. But the learned Athenians were too courteous and cultured to stone or beat Paul, so all he suffered was a little derision, - quite a contrast to the rough handling he got elsewhere.

But again Paul was sick; he left the queen city of learning and religion much downcast. He had spoken with candour softened with courtesy as he stood among their objects of worship, but they had only laughed.

Sick and sadly depressed, he came to Corinth. Here he surveyed the important, but terribly unpromising mission

field with dismay. The city had seven hundred thousand people, of whom four hundred thousand were slaves—a class without religion or morals.

But the Second Journey of Paul will ever be historic because it saw the founding of the Church at Corinth—certainly one of the greatest achievements of his or any man's life.

We have no better sample of the work he was called upon to do in the many churches he founded than in the Corinthian. This is not to say that every church offered him the problems and caused him the trouble that the Corinthians did; they were unique as trouble-makers. But we have a fuller account of the inner workings of this church than of any other. This affords us a better look-in upon the soul of the apostle and the soul of his churches in action. We may well pause for a more detailed study of this most interesting church which will serve in most respects to mirror the work of Paul in every other place where he laboured.

Corinth was situated on an elevated plain between the Mediterranean and the *Æ*gean Seas, where she reigned as a queen. It was the commercial capital of Greece and the cult-capital of the western world of that day. It lay in the path of the Christian conquest of the West, and was one of the first cities to be taken; it became one of the first centres of Christian light on the continent of Europe. This Corinth of the two seas was in size and culture the Boston of the Roman Empire. In Paul's day it was one of the three or four most important cities of the Empire, but it was more Oriental than Greek. It was the age's chief centre of corruption. It was a centre for the Isis cult, and Egyptian superstition which proved very demoralizing to parts of the Empire.

This cult, and others as well, had their shrines here to which were attached hundreds of debauched priestesses-courtesans. In its vice Corinth surpassed all others. Her great heathen temple is said to have had more than a thousand ministers of vice not found in other shrines of Greece.

Hayes says of Corinth, "At night its streets were hideous with the brawls and lewd songs of drunken revelry. In the daytime its markets and squares swarmed with Jewish peddlers, foreign traders, sailors, soldiers, athletes in training, boxers, wrestlers, charioteers, racing men, betting men, courtesans, slaves, idlers, and parasites of every description—a veritable pandemonium."² To live like a Corinthian was a synonym for abandonment to vice and immorality. Besides being a name for vice, it was a centre of luxury and vaunted culture.

Corinth, robbed, ruined, and destroyed by the ancient Romans, had lain desolate for a century, when it was re-founded by Julius Caesar in 46 B.C. By Paul's day it had become one of the greatest centres of Hellenic life. It was commonly referred to as "prosperous Corinth;" it was spoken of as "the bridge of the sea," "the gate of the Peloponnesus." It was a gateway for the vast flow of commerce from East to West.

Into this centre of commerce, shrine of art, culture, and religion; into this vortex of iniquity came Paul with a new message and a new life. Here he touched pagan life at its darkest and worst. His lurid picture of Gentile sin in the first pages of his Roman Epistle is probably a transcript from the life as he knew it in Corinth. In this stronghold of pagan corruption Paul planted the Cross of Christ which was as a beacon light in the dense darkness.

The apostle, as I have said, had come to Corinth from Athens, where he had had a verbal set-to with the skeptical votaries of philosophy, and had gone down in defeat. He had trudged out of Athens amid the jeers and cat-calls of the learned ones.

This was not a very good state of mind in which to initiate a new work calling for leadership and zeal. But if he had missed the mark in Athens, he was determined not to repeat the mistake in Corinth. The world, he now saw,

² *Paul and His Epistles*, p. 192.

was not to be saved by philosophy. This may explain why in his letters he seems to deprecate philosophy, "the wisdom of the world," occasionally sounding a warning against it.

Against the corruption of Corinth he would pit the Cross of Christ. Here he would preach nothing "save Jesus Christ and him crucified." And this "word of the Cross" Paul preached and lived with such fervour and consistency that miracles of individual transformation were wrought in pleasure-loving, vice-eaten Corinth. Miracles, did I say? Yes, for when writing afterward to his converts there, he gives a black list of the worst of evildoers, and adds: "Such were some of you; but ye were washed, made clean, justified."³

Though he had begun his work in Corinth in "weakness and fear and trembling," he soon recovered from the philosophic frown of the Athenians and became once more Christ's bold ambassador pressing the message of the Cross and the resurrection with manful vigour. In Acts he tells us that he resolved to make full proof of his ministry here. And when Paul resolved, he usually carried his resolve through. He spent eighteen months in Corinth.

In this focus of pagan civilization, this mirror of the life and society of the age, this Corinth which was a mart to the vendors of every sort of wisdom and religion, Paul planted a Christian community of an unusual character. The Church at Corinth became strong in numbers, was unusual in the talent of its leaders, unexcelled in the activity of all its members. The church was mainly Gentile, but it had an infusion of Jewish adherents. It possessed a high average of intelligence, though there were among them at the beginning, "not many wise, not many mighty, not many high-born." Paul does not hesitate later to remind them that many of them had been steeped in pagan vice; they were sprung from the "foolish of the world," from the "weak and base-born." Upon the preaching of the Gospel

³ I Cor. 6:9-11.

their Hellenic intellects and mystery-loving souls awoke at the touch of faith in Christ.

But the Corinthians, once the fervour of conversion had somewhat abated, were found to still possess many grave faults. They were still far from the exalted Christian ideal which the apostle cherished for them. Their habits and lives had been formed in a notorious environment. It was extremely difficult to practice the Christian ethic amid the heathen influences which surrounded them.

Like the philosophers at Athens, the Corinthians betrayed a childish conceit, a fondness for rhetoric and philosophical jargon. They were given to the party-spirit, strife and dis-harmony characteristic of Greece in her decadence. The turbulence of the Corinthians, their party heat is unmatched in the New Testament. "The very formlessness of this church, in its rudimentary and protoplasmic state," says Dr. G. G. Findlay, "reveals the essence of the Christian society, its sub-stratum and vital tissue, as these can hardly be seen in a more developed and furnished condition." It is the First Epistle to the Corinthians which affords us the surpassing picture of the interior life of this church, and chapters twelve and thirteen are the heart of the epistle. Paul here demonstrates his masterly and sympathetic insight into the situation and proves himself the master of it.

They became embroiled in a heated argument as to what constituted the most desirable gift. Some said it was wisdom, some knowledge, some faith, some power to heal; others said it was preaching or eloquence, others teaching, still others speaking in tongues.

To their question, Which is the greater gift? Paul declared that they were all great. The Church, he says, is one body with many members; there are many gifts, but all spring from one source, the Spirit of God. The Church is not a "monotonous aggregation of similars," as a pool of water or a heap of stones; it has the oneness of a living organism; no member exercises the same faculty as another. It is an orchestra composed of many very different instruments, but

moving to the motion of one Master, Christ. Each blends its peculiar music into one vast, beautiful, harmonious strain.

By way of illustration, he cites the human body, all the members of which—many as they are—form but one body. Just as the members of the body obey the head or brain which controls it, so is the Church a living body, all the members of which are instinct (or should be) with one Personality, Christ. Just as in the human body it is not one member, but many that constitute it, so is the Church composed of all its members possessing varying gifts, some greater, some less, but all essential to its spiritual ongoing—and alike precious to God. The foot cannot say, "Because I am not the hand, I am no part of the body." Does saying so make it no part of the body? The ear cannot say, "Because I am not the eye, I am no part of the body." Does such reasoning remove it from the body?—Many members, but one body.

Moreover, there is an obvious interdependence of the members. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of thee." The head cannot say to the feet, "I have no need of you." All are necessary to the body. The eye finds its mate in the hand. The head finds its complement in the foot.

It was also during this remarkable Second Journey in the year 52 that Paul came to Philippi. It was the first entrance into the continent of Europe. He had answered the call to the West by a man from Macedonia which haunted him saying, Come over and help us. The man was probably Luke, the physician, who lived at Philippi. It was worth going just to convert one such man as Luke. But while it was a *man* who had summoned Paul to Macedonia in a vision, when he arrived he found a *woman* first of all. The woman was Lydia, a seller of purple who became one of the most valuable Christian women of that day.

There was no synagogue at Philippi, which meant that few Jews lived there, but they had a *proseucha*, an enclosure on the banks of the river where they met a mile

from town. Here, too, it was the old story over again—preaching, opposition from the town, arrest. But here Paul becomes the hero of a comedy. He let the town authorities imprison and beat him and then he threw the bombshell of his Roman citizenship among them. This he did in such a way as to make it plain that he enjoyed it. It is more than amusing, it is humourous, to see the mayor and his staff come and beg him to come out of the foul, uncomfortable quarters from which he had refused to budge.

Philippi was one of the few places Paul left with dignity. More than once his Roman citizenship stood him in good stead and more than once saved his life. His last visit to Jerusalem is a good case in point. During the day he was violently mobbed, but at nine o'clock that night two hundred legionaries, two hundred lancers, and seventy horse stood before the fort of Antonia with orders to convey the prisoner to Cæsarea. Finally, Festus could not try Paul, since he was a Roman citizen and could not be remitted from an Imperial court to a Provincial court. To submit to trial before the Jews was to make them a present of his life. It must have been with considerable pride that Paul pronounced the two magical words: *Cæsarem Apello!* “I appeal to Cæsar.” In his very death his Roman citizenship plays its part. Peter was no Roman citizen; he died on a cross in Nero’s garden. But Paul was spared that shameful treatment. He had a long walk to his death to where his head was clipped from his shoulders by a smooth, sharp sword—an honourable way to die.

V

There is wide agreement in the conviction that Paul’s genius in the use of words and ideas nowhere excels his thirteenth chapter of the first Corinthian letter. Like so much of his writing, it was born in a crisis—flung hot from his heart to meet the exigencies of a troubled hour. It is a digression. That we have it at all seems due to accident. Their heated argument as to what was the greater Christian

gift was the occasion of its birth. It is not a logical continuation of the twelfth chapter, though it springs from the incidents recorded in it.

Paul must have surprised himself, as he does us, upon finding himself swept into the music of this matchless Hymn to Love. It flowed from a harrowed heart; was a vision of Divine perfection intended to contrast and magnify the saddening imperfections of the Christians at Corinth. It is an ideal of faultless purity set over against their flagrant impurity. It is the finest gem ever carved to the honour of Love, "the highest encomium of the Queen of Graces that genius ever indited." It is a flawless fabric of words, similar in rhythmic surge and mechanical force, though differing in subject, to Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. It arouses no controversy (how different from the strife of the Corinthians!); it contains no exaggeration of the virtue whose praise it sings; it does not deprecate any other Christian quality which it mentions, such as Faith or Eloquence; these do not suffer from comparison with Love.

Nowhere does the apostle attempt to define Love; he is content to illustrate it, to partially analyze it, to observe it in action. He simply notes for us Love's behaviour. While there is no belittling of faith or hope or benevolence, there is a designation of Love as "*the most excellent way.*"

*"When prophecy her tale has finished,
Knowledge has withered from the trembling tongue,
Love shall survive, and love be undiminished,
Love be imperishable, and love be young."*

What is Love? This eloquent panegyric does not tell us. It defies illustration. Paul sees enshrined in it all Christian virtues. If the Spirit is the parent of all Christian gifts, as he says in chapter twelve, Love is the parent of all Christian graces. James calls it the "royal law," John, the proof that one is a Christian. Jesus said it embraced the whole duty of man, while Paul elsewhere says it sums up and fulfils the Law. But none of these nor all of them together

tells us what Love is. They are so many exquisite aphorisms telling us how Love acts. Dr. Findlay's paraphrase is full of rare beauty:

*"Love suffers long, shows kindness.
Love envies not, makes no self-display;
Is not puffed up, behaves not unseemly;
Seeks not her advantage, is not embittered;
Imputes not evil, rejoices not a wrong, but
shares in the joy of the truth.
All things she tolerates, all things she believes;
All things she hopes for, all things she endures."*⁴

Paul is far from despising intellectual gifts, but warns of the witchery and glamour which attend them. He says that Love, not ability or talent, is the supreme thing. But have we not persistently reversed these? To which do we give the larger place—Love or ability?

After pondering such a message, this flighty young Greek Church must have seen that it had much to learn and far to go to be fully Christian. Here was an answer to their boasted learning and false spiritualism; an antidote to all our restless egotism and prideful conceits. The Corinthians had brought into the Church of Christ their Greek contentiousness and their anti-social spirit. A church is a Christian brotherhood. But their strife about "gifts" is fatal to the spirit of brotherhood. Paul talks about their "sin against the brethren." He says it is a "sin against Christ."

Yet it certainly is the truth to say that the crowning work of Paul's second missionary journey was the founding of the Corinthian Church.

VI

The Third Missionary Journey embraced Ephesus, the region of ancient Troy (Troas) and many parts of Asia

⁴ *Expositor's Greek Testament*, "Corinthians," p. 899.

Minor. It did not take him farther than his remarkable Second Journey, except in Macedonia, where he skirted the western shores of northern Greece. Nothing but the Adriatic Sea lay between him and the continent of Europe, which he entered on his last journey and voyage to Rome.

This Troas of Paul's travels was the Troy of the ancient classical Greeks, the scene of Homer's immortal epics, the *Illiad* and the *Odyssey*. From here, too, sprang the *Æneid* of Horace. This region of Troy gave the world some of its greatest literary heroes—such unforgettable personalities as Agamemnon, Achilles, Ulysses, *Æneas*, and another hero, Dr. Luke, Paul's physician and travelling companion who penned the most beautiful life of Jesus in the New Testament. At Troas Paul found himself at the four corners of the road with the guide-posts all down and the night dark. Then came the vision of the man from Macedonia and with him fresh guidance. The heroes of Troy's terrible battle were the crafty and powerful Ulysses and the invincible Achilles. But now another battle rages on this classic spot, and the Man of Tarsus is its hero.

He is the hero of the wars of God. It was Christianity which set Paul upon the road to Damascus and all the roads which lay beyond Damascus, roads which threaded out to the far frontiers of the iron kingdom. He kindled to the vision of a converted Rome. He visioned a triumphant Church extending to the Pillars of Hercules. Along these long highways stretching out to the farthest bounds ran Paul, chanting as he went the glorious epic which is humanity. This man, with a light in his soul, though he had a stitch in his side, went skipping excitedly like a happy child, back and forth, up and down the broad expanse of the mighty melancholic Empire, releasing forces which would one day overturn what seemed immovable.

The softening sympathy and the solemn theology of Paul would in time break the pride and curb the arrogance even of this nation of conquerors, and cast them suppliant upon the mercy of God. And Dr. Glover says that as the Roman

Empire was permeated and overcome by Christianity, so the rest of the world will be, if only it remains loyal to its divine ideal. No soft-natured philosopher fanning through the land could have done what Paul did. He had the zeal of a half dozen apostles. Against the principalities and powers of sin he had declared war, and he would make it war to the hilt.

It is well known that Napoleon was a man with a map and an idea; the map was that of the world, the idea was the world for Napoleon. And Paul was a man with a map and an idea; the map was that of the world, but the idea was *the world for Christ*. The difference between the motives of the little Corsican and the intrepid Tarsan was the difference between selfishness and unselfishness.

While Paul was an inveterate vagrant, he was not a Livingstone wandering in trackless places charting roads across an unknown world. He followed, as said above, the beaten tracks of trade and travel. It was in the realm of thought and ideas that he was a pioneer, going where others had not gone. It was in matters spiritual that he refused to build on other men's foundations.

What interest he had in foundations! He wanted to find the bed-rock answers of life. He desired to build life more towering, more lasting. Life to him was not a cheap bungalow affair; at its best, it was a structure of skyscraper proportions erected on a foundation that endures. "And," said he, "other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."⁵ If we think of life as a cheap temporary affair, we do not worry about getting down to the bed-rock. We merely dig to the shallows below the frost line and build our house. It will do to eat and sleep in *for a while*. But it is not thus that we build a skyscraper. We drill through sand and clay until we find the main stratum of solid rock. On such a foundation is a permanent building reared.

⁵ I Cor. 3:11.

We have seen how the sea haunted the apostle. The splendid roads and cities of Rome fascinated him no less. They challenged him. He was not only preacher and thinker, but ingenious organizer. He visioned a Church on a pattern not unlike the imposing and systematic Empire which he never ceased to admire.

These were great days for the Church and the world. All his great churches were founded and some of his greatest letters were written in this active period of his life. It was at the conclusion of this third journey, which took him back to Jerusalem, that he was arrested.

This imprisonment at Cæsarea marks the end of his free voluntary missions, but though taken to Rome as a prisoner (having appealed his case to Cæsar), he made it a missionary journey—his fourth—of great importance. He evangelized on his voyage, and for three whole years used his Roman prison as a mission station of far-reaching consequence.

As to whether the apostle was subsequently freed or not is a question among scholars; but at all events, he enjoyed sufficient liberty, whether within or without the prison, to make some notable converts in the Eternal City, and to give direction to Christian missions of consequence in many parts of the Empire.

In all this, though he knew it not, Paul was acting the prologue of a Masterpiece—that masterpiece the stalwart, irresistible Church of Christ which, despite martyrdom, opposition, blood, and tears—was to become the state religion of Rome.

This first great Christian leader had a “reckless intrepidity that was content to company with death day after day, a certain gallant cheerfulness under impossible conditions” that to us, in our tame way of living, gives the feeling that our religion has lost somewhat of its radiance and romance.

Paul never knew Jesus in the flesh, yet the Christ of the Damascus road became his personal companion on the long

stony road of life and out into the beyond. This Christ of vision he preached as the unseen Companion of humanity on its pilgrimage.

VII

It cannot be unprofitable, in this connection, to make a racing and graphic survey of the writings of the apostle, taking note of the circumstances and places from which he wrote, considering his journeys and letters in their chronological order.

It was during the Second Missionary Journey that Paul first visited Thessalonica and founded the Church there. This chief town of Macedonia lay hard by the blue waters of the *Æ*gean. Across the bay stood the snowcapped Mount Olympus, the fabled home of the gods. The Thessalonian Church was composed of members from the working class. In it were "not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble."

It was among these day-labourers that Paul began a practice which he followed through all his ministry—that of working with his own hands that he might not be dependent on his converts for his living, that he might in every way put himself on equal footing with the humblest of his converts. Of the world's Saviour men had asked, "Is not this the Carpenter?" And of the world's greatest missionary they might have asked similarly, "Is not this the tent-maker?"

The letters which he afterwards addressed to the Thessalonian Church are conceded to be the earliest of the Pauline writings.

Galatians was written, it seems, to a group of churches in southern Galatia—Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Derbe, and Lystra. Hence the "South Galatian Theory" of this letter, which is now generally held by scholars. This was a rough mountainous country, swept by dangerous and torrential streams and infested by brigands. It was probably here that Paul experienced the "perils of rivers and perils of

robbers" about which he wrote to the Corinthians later.⁶ We have seen that the Corinthian Church was founded during the Second Journey. Paul's letters to the Church are next in order. His terrible indictment of heathen vice in his Roman letter was written from Corinth.⁷

While at Corinth Paul had conceived the fourth and greatest of all his missionary journeys—a trip to Rome, the very capital of the Empire. So accordingly about the year A.D. 58 he wrote to the Roman Christians his profoundest Epistle, the Romans, which stands first among his writings in the New Testament because it was considered the most important. When this letter was written, the apostle expected to be in Rome in a few months, and so wrote to prepare the way for his coming. But one thing he must do first—go in person to Jerusalem with the offering which he had raised for the needy Christians there. But while there, as we have seen, he was arrested by his enemies, and not until after two trying years in prison did he reach Rome, and then as a prisoner in chains. Even this he accomplished only by pronouncing in the court of Festus at Cæsarea the fateful words, *Cæsarem apello*.

While hastening to Jerusalem during his Third Missionary Journey, Paul visited Ephesus briefly. Later he returned, and his second visit lasted more than two years. Ephesus was the gateway through which a multitude of travellers from the West entered Asia and the East. It was the capital of the Province Asia, and the leading town of Asia Minor.

The most imposing feature of the city was the temple of Artemis (Diana), one of the "Seven Wonders" of the ancient world. All nationalities met and mingled in its streets. It was a centre for crowds of pilgrims coming to worship at Artemis' shrine. For the Ephesians' religion was a lucrative business. In the great temple was the huge image of the goddess Artemis, which was very sacred to

⁶ II Cor. 11:26.

⁷ Rom. 1:21-32.

them. Miniature images of the goddess and the temple were in great demand among the votaries of the cult. When Paul began to preach the doctrine of the One God, implying that beside Him there was no other, Artemis was threatened, and a lucrative business endangered. To be sure, his words "made no small stir" among them. He had precipitated nothing less than a city-wide dual between Artemis and Christ.

Then it was that Demetrius, who made and sold these statuettes, incited the whole brotherhood of the image-makers to a riot which ended in Paul's ejection and that of his associates from the city. His preaching had disturbed a unit of the city's organized labour. It was dangerous business.⁸ Nonetheless, a strong church had been firmly established in Ephesus.

Much later from Rome, Paul penned the letter "to the Ephesians," which is believed to have been a circular letter addressed to all the churches of the Asian Province, but in particular to the Ephesians.

The Ephesian letter is one of that group known as "the Epistles of the Captivity" and, like Philippians, Philemon, Colossians, Titus, and I and II Timothy, was written while their author was in prison at Rome. Ephesians has been called "the Alps of the New Testament." Certainly it is one of the weightiest and loftiest of Paul's literary productions.

Philippians "is the happiest of all the apostle's letters to the churches," a love letter to his most beloved church. The Christians at Philippi constituted no small part of Paul's "joy in Christ."

In the "pastoral letters" to Titus and Timothy, Paul is bidding farewell to earth and its strife and looking toward the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Now it is that the veteran tent-maker finds it natural to refer to his body as a frail tent-dwelling soon to

⁸ II Cor. 5:1-4.

be taken down and replaced by a house Divinely built, eternal in the heavens.⁹

*“Yea, through life, death, through sorrow and through sinning,
Christ hath sufficed me, for he hath sufficed;
Christ is the end, for Christ is the beginning,
Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ.”*

A summary, then, of the true order of the Epistles about which there is the widest agreement among present day scholars is as follows: I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, Galatians, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Romans, Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians, Philemon, and the Pastoral Epistles, though not in their present form, perhaps, I Timothy, Titus, and II Timothy.

⁹ II Cor. 5:1-4.

VIII

THE BEARING OF PAUL'S EXPERIENCE ON HIS DOCTRINE

I

WHEN, in his letter to the Galatians, Paul writes, “It pleased God to reveal his Son in me,” he is talking about what from God’s standpoint is *revelation* but what from his own standpoint is *experience*. For, after all, revelation is experience. What we call the revelations of seers and prophets of ages past are but their religious experiences of God transmitted to us as revelation. We cannot escape the fact that every revelation from God was first some man’s human experience of God. Religion, not doctrine, is life. And experience, not creed, is the core of religion. All true religion finds its basis and dynamic in the experience of someone or other at some time or other. “All Divine Revelations,” says J. E. Rattenbury in his book, *The Religious Experience of St. Paul*, “which we find in the Bible were once direct human experiences. They have been preserved because men felt they were true.” He further says: If one could imagine a tropical river lifted up and bodily transferred to some temperate zone, it would bring to life seeds already there, and bring with it new life of its own from the tropics. “Such,” he tells us, “was the effect of the flood of divine experience on Paul’s mind.” Paul’s authority is always that of a first-hand experient of Christ. His is a reproducible experience; it is this reproducible experience of the soul which makes Paul one with all Christians, and constitutes the abiding *continuum* of vital Christianity.

It is plain that Paul’s religious experience had a strong

bearing on the formulation of his doctrines. In fact, it gave them birth. His doctrines grew out of his experience and not his experience out of his doctrines. Experience was the parent; doctrines the offspring. Just as God is obviously before theology, and animals before zoölogy, flowers and plants before botany, so was experience before doctrine in the teaching of Paul. Paul did not find his salvation because he came to hold a set of doctrinal beliefs including that of atonement. First came the experience of the atonement, then the formulation of the doctrine. When first the Cross was deeply burnt into the religious consciousness of Paul it was inevitable that it should crop out prominently in his preaching. But "justification by faith" was a vital part of the religious experience of Paul before it was a doctrine taught by him. Paul worked, as all of us must, from the "inner core of experience to the outer rind of doctrine." His experience of God in Christ was the inner core and the vital factor of all his Christian thinking. From this his doctrines gradually arose and got themselves written down in his letters and were thus passed on as fundamental Christian teaching.

But Paul's doctrines could but partially and imperfectly explain his experience; much less did they create it. Doctrine is an attempt to describe truth. But the great truths of God are beyond description, though not beyond experience. Experience is therefore a better criterion by which to test and measure truth than doctrine. If doctrines written down and preserved in words may be potential sources for the outbreaking of fresh religious experience—and that they may be Luther and Wesley, who thus renewed their souls as at a secret fountain of life, are proofs—they none the less draw their vitality and real worth from experience. Doctrine is finding names for our feelings. Especially was this so with Paul. Doctrines are in danger of becoming ends in themselves. But true religious experience never suffers itself to lose in the interest of mere doctrine the sense of the majesty of the Almighty or the emotional meaning of Christ.

Religion is primarily life, not doctrine. Christianity is vital, living religion, living because it has for its centre the living Christ. How is Christ perpetuated in the lives of men? By means of experience, not doctrine, though doctrine has its place. Buddha at his death might say, "Now my doctrine takes my place," thus acknowledging his teaching of more value than himself. Not so with Christianity. Christ's doctrine can never take His place. Christ continues in the experience of His followers. Too often doctrines have had the effect of embalming a Christ whom rites and the killing letter have rendered lifeless and inert. Among those lacking vital religious experience, Paul's doctrines have been subjected to many creedal hardenings and hurtful abuses. But with those who do not share his religious experience, his doctrines are not intelligible even, much less effective. To non-experiencers certain of Paul's doctrines are morally dangerous. Paul's mind is soaked in the spirit of Jesus, and ours must be, or much of his meaning escapes us. Paul is not so much the Christian sympathizer as the typical Christian experient. Far from making Christianity a religion of instruction merely, he made it one of redemption.

The Epistle to the Romans, it is agreed, contains more of Paul's theology than any other of his writings, but it is charged with his experience, as well, notably chapters seven and eight. There is no more searching analysis of human personality, as we have seen, to be found anywhere than that in Romans vii. It is a vital and graphic bit of the autobiography dug from the deepest depths of this vital and volcanic personality. It is the sure mark of the introvert, since so genuine and searching a piece of psychological analysis can only have come from introspection. But here, as everywhere in his writings, experience is the essence of Paul's theology. The Roman epistle, "a manifesto to the Gentile Church at the centre of the Gentile world," is more like a theological treatise than any other of Paul's writings. But it ethicizes the apostle's personal experiences. How could it be otherwise, since his religious experience from

his conversion through every aspect of his Christian career, was a personal affair? The chief fact of Paul's conversion is that he met a person, was transformed by a person, and became the willing bond-slave of a person. There is nothing of detachment, nothing impersonal in his teaching.

It is of interest to note Paul's claim to personal experience with Christ. It is true that his references to his conversion would lose much of their concreteness and vivid force, if we had never read Luke's account of Paul's vision of Christ on the Damascus road. Yet—he makes frequent casual reference to it. In I Corinthians 9:1 he says: "Have not I seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" In Philippians 3:12 he says: "I was laid hold on (arrested) by Christ Jesus." In Galatians 1:16 he says: "It pleased God to reveal his Son in me that I might preach him among the peoples." In II Corinthians 4:6 he speaks of Christ as a "shining in his heart." He had seen "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." These indicate not only a mystical fellowship with the spirit of Christ, but point without doubt to a personal vision of Christ, if in His glorified form.

Paul's theology, his ethics, and his doctrines are all rooted deeply in his experience. They are charged with emotion; never simply cool detached dogmas. Always he writes with "the burden of a laden conscience," his driving motive-force being a passionate love of Christ.

II

Paul's approach to the Atonement, that is, his so-called doctrine of the Cross (better stated, the Cross in Paul's experience) is but another example of the fact that in him doctrine is the child of experience. To Saul, the unconverted Jew, the thought of Messiah crucified was outrageous, maddeningly so; and before he could see any glory in that shameful cross, it was necessary that he have a vision of the risen Christ. He comes to glory in what he had formerly so much detested. He had seen the crucifixion as the shame

of Jesus, the sure sign of His weakness, the irrefutable evidence that He was not the Messiah. But now he sees in it not a sign of His disgrace, but rather a sign of His greatness. He actually glories in the Cross now. With what mystic power does he utter the words, "*loved me and gave himself for me*!" It has been said that the whole theology of the Atonement is contained in these stirring words. In the Cross Paul saw the supreme evidence of the love of God. It was the sign of patience under suffering, but more—of patience under wrong; the sign of God's unconditional forgiveness of wrongdoing, or better, His unconditional forgiveness of *wrongdoers*; the forgiveness of sinners rather than of sin. There is no bargain, no payment involved, no satisfaction to make. The Cross is the "supreme act of God's invasion of the world by love." It is the proof that God does not wait for our repentance before He forgives. *He forgives in order to provoke our repentance.* It has been said, Christ has died, therefore men may repent and be forgiven. It would be better to say, Christ has died for you, thinking you would be moved by so great an act of self-giving. O be ye reconciled to God!

The Cross of Christ! that monogram of the eternal mystery, the mystery of the *guiltless suffering of the unguilty, wherein the righteous suffers for the unrighteous*, which appears first in the prophets and is re-echoed in Job and the Psalms, now has a perfect fascination for Paul. He saw the suffering servant of the Second Isaiah personalized in Jesus and objectified in His Cross. In Golgotha the problem, already adumbrated in Jeremiah and Job, is repeated and surpassed in Christ of Calvary. But here, as is not the case there, it is the problem *solved*. While the abyss between man and God, "profanum" and "sanctum," sin and holiness, is not diminished, but deepened by the Cross of Christ, yet by the Cross it is also—somehow—bridged.

But to imprison this crucial happening in hard creedal statements cannot help us much; it is the *experience* of the Cross that we need, experience, not doctrine, gives life.

The one is dogma, the other deed; the one is explication, the other experience. In comparison with this, Paul resolved to know nothing beside. The Cross must be put at the centre of religious interests and life. Paul cannot really be said to have a dogma of the Cross. It is plain that there is nothing about which he feels so deeply, but at most his expressions concerning the Cross are but free-floating utterances and trial flights at expression of the divine mystery he sees in the Cross.

It is not for nothing that the Christian faith has fixed on the Cross as its truest symbol; it is by that grim and awesome thing that we are won and held; in it Christ's compulsion comes upon us and bends us to His will, as He believed it would, knew it must, for said He in utter confidence, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw men unto me. If they see me dying for them, I win. They cannot resist that." Here the Best Life with dogged valour throws itself away unreckoningly. It looks, on the face of it, like a piece of magnificent failure, nothing more; but victory skulks just behind in the shadows. The Cross, being the self-giving love of the self-giving God, storms men's hearts, shocks and stings and impels them, too, to fling themselves away in acts of valour and love. The Cross is time's greatest paradox; it began in the direst defeat and ended in the veriest victory.

At first Paul had said to himself, "Never mind about the death of Jesus, that is an enigma." He had seen the living Jesus, he knew Him to be the Christ of God. But on second thought he said, "Stop, stop, I must consider His death. The death of the sinless Son of God cannot have been an accident, it must have divine meanings." His Jewish training had taught him that death is connected with sin. It follows, then, that the death of the Anointed One had to do with sin, and since He was sinless and exalted, *with the sins of others*. He came to see the death of Christ as a sacrifice of God. The atoning sacrifice had been offered; the damaged relations between God and man had been repaired. At once he saw that all this explained his new experiences.

Remember that the whole of Paul's theology is nothing more nor less than his account of his experiences and those of the Christians with the living Christ.

Christ's Cross has come to be set down in the dull catalogue of common things, but there is nothing dull or flat in Paul's experimental sayings about it. We look at the Cross and are so cool and unstirred, too stupid to see the crystal splendours outshining from it. It lays little compulsion on our cool souls. That grim and glorious thing ought to grip and tear our hearts. Jesus thought it would, was sure it must. Go, take your stand, as Paul did, on Calvary. Here men in their ignorance crucified the Lord of Glory. Here God in His love offered His most costly sacrifice. And are you moved by it? Do you feel nothing? Are you too clod-like to feel the thrill and the pull of it? It is the Christian's conquering sign. On the Cross men crucified God's Son. In the Cross we may crucify the world.

The Cross of Christ gripped and haunted and laid compulsion on Paul as nothing else could. He took his stand on Calvary beside that thing of shame, and somehow came to know in its unplumbed depths God's unspeakable love, God's great salvation. The grim hangman's gibbet became for him a thing of irresistible charm. Dwelling on what Christ had suffered, he felt a desire to extend the sufferings of Christ in his own body that he might the better *know* Christ in the fellowship of His sufferings and the power of His resurrection. Thus he almost seems to welcome persecutions and the ignominy which the espousal of the Cross entails, because he finds something in them corresponding with what his honoured Master bore. Paul willingly lost all to gain Christ, and a crucified Christ at that. But he computed his loss as gain. There is a kind of stupid, foolish loss that is priceless gain. Such a gain was Paul's. Out of the frost-bitten blackness surrounding the Cross there bloomed for Paul the flowers of fadeless beauty. He allowed the Cross to haunt him, claim him, and lay compulsion upon him. To the end of his life he ecstatically talked of the

Cross, his devotion ever flaming out in uncooled and prolonged transport. Once the true meaning of the Cross dawned on him he had set about vigorously crucifying all his sins in Jesus' strength. He had lived the Cross until the very stuff of his mind had become permeated with it. So long had he bathed his spirit in the red flood that flowed from the side of the Crucified that the Cross had become simply appallingly glorious; had tangled hard with his imagination.

But it was not always so, even in post-Christian days. For most keenly did he feel at the first the fact that the preaching of Christ crucified was to the Jews a "scandal," and to the Greeks "foolishness." So it had been to him. But now he sees it, instead, "the power of God and the wisdom of God." But how the power of God, when death to One claimed divine seemed the sure disproof of His power? It had seemed preposterous, ludicrous, the height of unreasoned impiety for one who had suffered so disgraceful a death to claim to be the Messiah. Paul felt the piercing force of this opinion voiced by the foes of the Cross, for it had been his own earlier opinion. A crucified carpenter was indeed a strange rival to the romantic gods of the pagans. But Paul had turned the sensitiveness he had formerly felt in the Cross into exultant glorification of it. "God forbid that I should glory in anything save the cross of Christ."¹ The Cross which at first seemed a tale of weakness and folly had proved to be the goodness and shrewdness of God. In the Cross right and wrong had met in mortal conflict. What was wrong doing to right? It was trying to stamp it out. And what was right's reaction to wrong's deadly threat? Right, too, seeks to defeat wrong, but in how different a manner!—by forgiving the wrong-doer! The Cross is the abiding touchstone of right and wrong.

It was the Cross that taught the apostle to turn pain's baffling mystery into a holy ministry. In it he not only

¹ Gal. 6:14.

saw the depths to which the love of God can stoop, but also the heights to which the love of man can reach. Much as the words "he loved me and gave himself for me" meant to Paul's own heart, he could not repeat them without feeling an overwhelming sense of the obligation he bore to others. In the Cross he saw God reaching down, man reaching up—both reaching out. The Cross meant *others*, not *self*.

III

Just as Paul's experience was the mountain out of which flowed each of his doctrinal rills, so was experience the source of his Christian ethic. I have dealt elsewhere with Paul's ethical outlook in a broad way and with what may be called his social ethics in particular.² We come now to note the marks which his ethical conflict left on his own soul. We shall consider but one thing here, what may be called his ethic of the Atonement. It does not lie within the purpose of this volume to deal with the so-called Pauline theory or theories of the Atonement, but rather to sketch the dynamic for right-doing which he discovered in identifying himself with Christ's death. Paul's critics have made much of what they call his "juridical ways of treating salvation." But no matter what his approach to the Atonement was, it might be the ethic of the law court, it was more often that of the home, as the sequel will show, it might be couched in arguments called Rabbinical, as in the Galatian Epistle, but it cannot be lightly set aside. Anyway, what other argument would have been effective with rabbis? And the one goal of all his teaching was right-doing and a right spirit. Beside this, he taught substantially nothing else. In his preaching of Justification by faith Paul is declaring that apart from the Law a righteousness is revealed. The Cross is the concrete symbol of that righteousness.

Paul's ethical experience was an integral part of his inner experience of Christ and His Cross. In rich exhilaration of

² Chap. xi.

spirit he shouts in Romans 8, "There is therefore now no condemnation." Says he in effect, "The law court is behind us, the prison is escaped, the verdict of 'not guilty' has been pronounced upon us, we have become the liberated sons of the Father's house, established as members in His home. Now we cry fondly 'Abba, Father!'" The hard ethic of the law court has given way to the spirit and ethics of the home. The standards of the law court are superseded by those of the family. All this has come about, says Paul, "through the blood of his Cross." The Cross meant that God sought and saved the lost. It cancelled debts, delivered from prison, redeemed from slavery, made men just before God, brought reconciliation and peace.

In the Cross Paul saw mankind justified before God. But it was in his purpose too to "justify the ways of God to man." This has been called Paul's ethical problem in connection with the Atonement. How can God forgive sin without condoning it? Altogether too much has been made of Paul's metaphors in connection with his doctrine of Salvation. His symbolical ransom-language need not be taken too literally. It is sure to be misleading if and when it is. It must be admitted that Puritan Paulinism unwittingly but effectively buried Paul, as Dr. Rattenbury well says, "under ponderous volumes of dreary and irrelevant discussions of his secondary notions and chance metaphors." We should not make the mistake of reading poetry as prose, or take similes with deadly literalness. It is unsafe to make a dogma from a metaphor. But it is perilous to build a theological system on metaphors. Thus men have tried to make "winged poetry do the work of four-footed logic." Metaphors cannot be very successfully made to run on all fours. But western interpreters of Paul, in treating metaphor as logic, have committed a literary crime against him. It is extremely difficult to coin experience into dogmas. Doctrine can be taught effectively by ordinary didactic methods, but not experience.

How futile to try to construct from his letters a closed

system of thought and call it Pauline! There is nothing systematic about them; they are everywhere characterized by a splendid indifference to consistency which has been the despair of the system-makers, but they will ever hold a permanent place as guides of religious experience.

Paul was all for experience and nothing for ritual. He saw no beauty in circumcision of the flesh, only in the circumcision of the heart. When the Judaizing Christians went through the Church upsetting his spiritual work, returning his converts to allegiance to the flesh, he cries: "O senseless Galatians, who has bewitched you? Are you such fools? Did you begin with the spirit only to end now with the flesh? Have you had all that *experience* for nothing?"³ He declared that these individuals wanted them circumcised to enable them to boast over their flesh. "But no boasting for me," he says—"none except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Jerusalem on earth is bound, but Jerusalem on high is free, and she is the mother of Christians.

Paul could not tolerate divisiveness because it was a threat to liberty. When the Corinthians were rallying about certain men to the exclusion of others, he wrote: "Brothers, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, I beg of you to drop these party cries."⁴

And yet—because he was an experient and not a doctrinaire merely, he could sacrifice his personal liberty and submit to slavery. "Why, free as I am from all, I have made myself the slave of all, that I might win the many."⁵ But his teaching concerning meat offered to idols is still our finest principle of Christian toleration. His rule was: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity;" and a rare Christian experience made him so.

Though words are an insufficient vehicle of religious experience, we understand enough of Paul to know that his contact with Jesus meant for him a resurrection from a death

³ Gal. 3:1, 3, 4.

⁴ I Cor. 1:10.

⁵ I Cor. 9:19.

of sins, and an ascension to the heights of heavenly peace. His kingdom of darkness had become a realm of shining light, his spiritual conflict had given way to inner harmony and peace. No stronger note of positive assurance breathes anywhere in Paul than the certainty with which he felt himself and the Christians established in the Father's home. Nothing could separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus—nothing celestial, terrestrial, infernal, imaginable, or unimaginable; nothing can sever the love-ties which link a soul to Christ. It is the one unbreakable thing in the universe.

IV

As to the social and international aspects of Paul's ethic of the Cross, it is developed at length in his prison epistles, *Colossians* and *Ephesians*, especially in the latter. Whatever in Paul's Jewish inheritance underwent modification when he became a Christian, he carried over with him into Christianity the spiritual knowledge and cardinal ideas of the Jews. Great ideas like that of God in His oneness and holiness underwent no change in the transition he made. To the essentials of religious belief he ever clung with unswerving tenacity. He could say, "Behold I have a goodly heritage." Non-essentials of his ancestral inheritance, such as the rite of circumcision, he eliminated from the requirements of Gentile Christians, since it could in no way effect spiritual life.

In this he seemed to the Jews like a traitor. But no matter, Christianity which he saw as overreaching national bounds and race traditions, must not be cramped and kept within the narrow confines of Hebrew religion. He saw the Church as the super-national, super-class, super-sex, super-sectional family of God. It must not be saddled with the incubus of Jewish tradition. For him, Christian experience had dissolved the frowning barriers of Jewish nationalism. It is the family ethic he exalts. Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles, are those who have a common possession, "one

hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.”⁶ One spirit, one interest, one purpose are shared by all the members of the family for the good of all, “ forbearing one another in love.”

Though composed of divers and diverse individuals, the Church shall work with such one-hearted purpose as if but one. In Ephesians the apostle links all Christians as members in the one family of God, and in First Corinthians he equates that family with Christ. We are amazed, yet gladdened, at the bold way in which he equates Christ with the Christian believer and with the whole Church. This ideal Church of the Ephesians is a glory-filled temple of the Lord —“a society of experiencing Christians.”

Paul dreamed of the Holy Catholic Church, the Church above the nations, one of the noblest dreams a man ever dreamed, despite the grim failure of the Roman Catholic Church of the Middle Ages which sought only the outward realization of Paul’s dream, while leaving the inner spirit of it behind. He saw the Church as that which could give a soul to the superbly organized Roman Empire. Paul’s dream was realized in a very different way from what he had supposed; it did capture the Empire, but in doing so, exposed and finally lost its own soul. But the Church Catholic did not lose its soul until Christian experience was lost sight of, giving place to cold and lifeless dogmas.

We have been thinking of what Christianity did to Paul. Let us now consider what Paul did to Christianity. Who was Christ, according to Paul, and what was the essence of Christianity? This, it shall be the purpose of the ensuing chapter to disclose.

⁶ Eph. 4:4-6.

PART THREE

IX

CHRIST AND THE CHRISTIAN ACCORDING TO PAUL

PAUL is pre-eminently a spiritual thinker. Of this nothing offers such convincing proof as his deep and high thinking about Christ, in the first place, and his deep and high thinking about the Christian, in the second. No one ever had such high thoughts about Christ as did Paul; he exalts Him to the highest place that thought can reach or language express; but his thoughts about the Christian are scarcely less exalted than are his highest thoughts about Christ.

Paul's religion is full of hard ideals, but the hard ideals of so inward and free a religion as his is, nevertheless, grounded in love. But love, above all things the love of Christ, is something that can be known only by those who possess it. To have love is to know Christ. We may know the Jesus of history and not possess Him; but to know the Christ of experience is truly to have Him as a personal and priceless possession.

According to Paul's religion, Jesus in history is the first of basic facts; and Jesus in the Christian is the second. Indeed, next to the lordship of Christ, the most basic principle in Paul's faith is the experience of the high truth that Christ lives on in the Christian. The Christianity of Paul rests upon the fact of the historicity of Jesus. Yet—his religion is not of the past, but of an inward and present nature. Jesus had gone, but Christ remains. This is for Paul the most potent of realities.

In a subsequent chapter on Paul as a mystic we shall glimpse the apostle's thought about Christ, whilst in one dealing with his ethics, we shall survey his conception of the mind of Christ in its outward aspects, that is, toward society and the problems of men in their relation to each other in the world.¹

I wish now to deal more specifically with what Paul considered Christ to be. Who was Christ according to Paul? This will involve us, to be sure, in what is known as Paul's Christology, and Paul's Theology, but more in the experience of Christ in His own person, hence with Paul's definition of a Christian.

I

The first important transition which Christianity had to make was made at the very beginning; the transition from a present to an absent Jesus, from the Prophet of Galilee to the Lord of Glory, from the Jesus of history to the Christ of experience; and none played so important a part in it as did Paul. It could not be that the death of Jesus was the end of Jesus. To those who had known Him in His earthly life the Resurrection had made that certain. But Jesus had to be saved for the ages, had to be made a continuing presence in the life of the believer.

In the resurrection of Christ the Jesus of history came to an end and the Christ of Christian experience emerged. With that great epoch the transition was made from Jesus in history to Jesus in the mind of the Christian. The four Gospels have to do with the Jesus of history, the Epistles of Paul with the Christ of inner experience.

This first great transition Paul bridged by means of an inner experience of Jesus. Jesus in the mind of the Christian was Jesus present still. This truth amounted to a new revelation to Paul.—A Christ not dependent upon creeds, ritual, or organization, but known through experience of the

¹ See Chaps. x and xi.

Christian. In Paul's thinking the Jesus of history and of the Cross has perfect oneness with the Christ of experience. For him, Jesus in history becomes Jesus in the mind of the Christian. Only that in Jesus' nature and experience which was capable of such transition was to Paul of religious significance.

It is noteworthy that Paul says little about the earthly life of Jesus. He seems to care little about the historical Jesus, his chief concern being the death of Christ, His cross and His resurrection. But are we warranted in concluding, on the basis that he says little about the earthly life of Jesus, that he was unconcerned about it, or that it was unknown to him? I do not think so. Does he not take the earthly reality of Jesus for granted? Is not the story of Jesus well known to all? It seems to me that his letters show this throughout. Anyhow, neither Paul nor his letters can be explained without the historical Jesus. Apart from the fact of the Jesus of history it is impossible to account for Paul the Christian. As well try account for light in the cosmos, leaving the sun out of consideration, as to try to account for Paul apart from Jesus. Just as Paul is the best evidence for the historicity of Jesus, so is the earthly Jesus the one valid explanation of the transformed and Christian Paul.

II

The complaint is sometimes made that there is more of Paul in his letters than of Jesus. It is true; but there is not more of Paul in Paul's letters than there is of Christ, that is, the Christ of faith and experience. But, if Paul is very much to be found in his letters, it is not that he is egotistic as some have charged, but that he is being attacked and must defend himself (or rather the Christian way of life), and chooses, while doing so, to set forth his experience of Christ. Moreover, what Paul says about himself is nearly always said under compulsion and with protest. But the fact that Paul was forced to defend himself has but made the ages the richer. The question of the ego

in Paul's experience will be dealt with elsewhere in this chapter.

Paul has been called, and not without reason, the first of Christian theologians. That he has been the principal source for theologies and Christologies from his age to ours, cannot be refuted; all great Christian thinkers of whatever opinion have dipped their pens deep in Paul. But Paul was a maker of Christians far more than of Christologies. He was concerned more with knowing Christ than knowing about Him. He was not so much interested in things about Jesus, though he knew Jesus as a fact in history, the most potent and powerful fact of all. We could wish that Paul had shown more interest in the human, historical Jesus, but that he knew Him fully cannot be successfully contradicted. His comparative silence on the matter does not argue ignorance of the fact. How could he love Him so much and know Him so little? Paul was so close to the earthly Jesus that he simply took Him for granted. His world was full of eye-witnesses of Jesus who were yet living. Doubts regarding His historical reality or personal nature had not yet arisen.

There are many today who know Jesus, who desire, it would seem, to know Him only as one apart, as an objective thing rather than an historical person. Some writers of *Lives* of Christ fall clearly into this class. But not Paul. Questions about Jesus were of minor importance to him, because *knowing* Jesus was the thing he passionately desired. "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."² The right to infer with all confidence that Christ is God in man and that God is like Christ, Paul does not question. He does have a high doctrine of what Jesus is, and with this we shall deal in due time, but he has been drawn upon too heavily by the fashioners of high Christologies. Paul did not think that Christ

² Phil. 3:10.

needed to be explained so much as experienced; in fact, to experience Christ is the only satisfactory way to either know or explain Him.

We shall not be on the road to the understanding of Paul, however, until we learn that it is his purpose, far from explaining Jesus Christ, to present Him as "the explanation of all the problems of religious faith and life." Take one example: the problem of the Messiah. For Paul, Jesus was the Messiah, though he made the word carry no longer its old Jewish connotation or meaning. Jesus, to Paul, was not the problem, but its solution.

The marked difference between our modern attitude toward Jesus and that of Paul toward Him might be stated as the difference between faith and doubt. The modern temper is one of doubt stripped of practically all emotion. Paul's was the reverse. His very language about Jesus is that of love and worship rather than of doubt and fear and speculation, as is so much of ours. His is unmistakably and intensely the language of emotion, of religion. No language about Christ is so natural to the devout Christian as is the language of wonder, of worship, of gratitude, and of love. Our great concern today is to know more about Jesus; and in pressing for knowledge about Him, are we not missing what Paul gained, namely, a Jesus who is clearly beyond agnosticism, a Christ whom the Higher Criticism cannot touch; best of all, a Jesus within creating in us His own likeness?

III

Paul made the mind of Christ, not creeds or Christologies, the test of a true Christian. To the well nigh blameless Philippians he felt bound to urge: "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus."³ To the none too perfect Corinthians he wrote concerning Christians: "We have the mind of Christ,"⁴ and went on to add, "If any man have

³ Phil. 2:5.

⁴ I Cor. 2:16.

not the mind of Christ, he is none of his." Paul says nothing is Christian which is not according to Jesus Himself; and nothing is Christian which is not in keeping with the new man fashioned after the mind and spirit of Christ—the Christian. All Christian thinking, says Paul in effect, must be, in the first place, according to Jesus, and in the second, according to the Christian subdued and guided by the mind of Jesus. This is a safe procedure, for "If any man is in Christ there is a new creation: the old things are passed away; behold new things have come to be."⁵

Christians are those who live free exalted lives; they have left strife and rivalries and jealousies, such as plague the Corinthians, far behind and beneath them, "For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; but ye are Christ's; but Christ is God's."⁶ Logic does not outrun the truth as Paul feels it in the ties that bind the believer to Christ his Redeemer and God his Father.

If this exalted relation of the Christian to God is not easily gained, neither is it easily lost, for "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."⁷ There may be powers fierce and gods many, but none of them, nor all of them together, can separate the Christian from the love of God. This is so because the Christian's oneness in love and trust with Christ becomes a oneness in nature with Him. The Christian cannot be separated from God because Christ is inseparable from God: Christians are "in Christ." From worship of Christ the

⁵ II Cor. 5:17.

⁶ I Cor. 3:21-23.

⁷ Rom. 8:35-39.

Christian experience passes to oneness with Christ; they are inseparable, Christ and the Christian.

In Paul's thinking Christ is exalted to the highest position.

Does the conception that Christ has the highest place of all constitute a distinction that separates Him in nature and degree of spiritual attainment from us? In degree, surely, but in nature, not necessarily. Says F. C. Porter: "No doctrine of the person of Christ is Pauline that does not leave possible and even make natural and inevitable the oneness of the Christian with Christ. Christ's nature is such, being love, that He wills to share that nature with others."⁸

Seeing that Paul's conception of the Christian is the most exalted one imaginable, it is not strange that he elevates Christ to the supreme place, indeed, it is because of this, it seems to me, that he sees the Christian's position as one which is so exalted. He would be the last man to say that "the character of Jesus forbids His possible classification with men;" on the contrary, the classification of all men with Christ is the essence of his Gospel.⁹ Having said this much, let us go on now to examine briefly the several so-called Christological hymns scattered through Paul's epistles.

IV

In the first letter to the Corinthians (8:6) we read one of Paul's earliest hints at the creatorship of Christ: "To us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him."

In this passage Paul seems to lift Christ out of the category of beings human and to set Him in that of the Divine and completely apart. It is the first of those passages which give Jesus cosmic range and significance, which set Him, according to the thinking of some, "completely apart from

⁸ F. C. Porter, *The Mind of Christ in Paul*, p. 148. Charles Scribner's Sons. Used by permission.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

humanity.”¹⁰ This has been called the Stoic Creed of Christianity, due to the resemblance it bears to Marcus Arelius’ words addressed to Nature: “From thee are all things, in thee all things, unto thee all things.” It does seem that Paul, in his effort to bring all things into subjection to Jesus, comes near to substituting Jesus Christ for Nature, the Stoic deity. Thus, it seems to me, does he unite the Hebrew Wisdom and the Greek Logos and lift Christianity out of Judaism into association with Platonic philosophy. Not that Paul Hellenized Christianity, he fought against this to the last, in fact; but without scarcely knowing it, he was breaking the way for the passage of Christianity from the Hebrew world of its origin to the Greek world of its great expansion.

Now, this, of course, was the second great transition which Christianity had to make, and again, while Paul was not the first to make the change, he was the most important single figure in it. Just as Paul tried to put Christ in the place of the Law and the Church in the place of Israel as the instruments of God through which His purposes for the world are to be fulfilled, so does he attempt in this passage—and comes marvellously near to achieving, it seems to me—the blending of Hebrew Monotheism with Stoic Pantheism. At all events, what he arrives at is a Christian philosophy of the person of Jesus.

While in most respects Paul remained to the end the most Hebrew of the Hebrews, yet in his purpose to become “all things to all men” he became in certain respects decidedly non-Jewish, if not Greek. His twin declaration that Christ was the end of the Law, and that Christians meant

¹⁰ So Frank Chamberlain Porter, in his book, *The Mind of Christ in Paul*, doubts the Pauline authority of the various Christological passages in his letters. He thinks he quotes them from Christian or other religious hymns already extant. Cf. this view with Deissmann, who thinks it “a grave misunderstanding to take these psalms of the apostolic Christ-cult for Christological and dogmatic treatises and paragraphs.” *The New Testament in the Light of Modern Research*, p. 98.

the end of Israel as God's chosen people, was fatal to Judaism. It meant disaster for the Jewish religious order, and they had the insight to see it quite early. There was no longer a distinction between Jew and Greek. The shameful taboo which hung engraved in large letters in the Temple at Jerusalem: "*Let no foreigner enter within the screen and enclosure surrounding the sanctuary. Whosoever is taken so doing will himself be the cause that death overtakes him,*" was to be disregarded. This separating wall Paul saw should be broken down, and he got this, as well as other revolutionary ideas, from Christ Himself. Christ had called him to be the apostle to the peoples. Christ was the greatest of God's acts in human history—the end of the old order and the beginning of the new. He belonged not to Israel, but to the nations, and Paul proposed to take Him to the peoples. Love was the element in Christ which had melted the barriers which loveless Law had reared between men and nations.

And yet—it is the truth to say that Paul was always shy of Greek philosophy, though no more so than of Jewish legalism. He was no more afraid of the boasted Wisdom (*sophia*) and Knowledge (*knosis*) of Greek intellectualism than of the unbending legalism of his own race. Having been exceedingly zealous for traditions, he became as zealous for absolute freedom from them. But if he will not be bound by traditions of Jewish scribes, neither will he bow to a new form of slavery such as Gnosticism or Greek philosophy. To the Hellenizing Christians at Corinth he expresses his fear that among them the Gospel might become a philosophy, degenerating to a mere wisdom of this world, which had already proved itself to be foolishness, since it had been powerless to attain to the knowledge of God. Here, at all events, Paul refuses to be a Greek to the Greeks, but manfully withstands their attempt to conform to the Greek world of their past or to the Hellenistic world of their present environment.

For the Hebrew Wisdom, the Greek Logos, and the Stoic

Knowledge Paul substituted Christ, the Wisdom of God and the Living Word of God. These others constitute a wisdom of this world, and can be had only by the superior few. Christianity is a wisdom and a knowledge of the sort that can be had by the ignorant and the weak as well as the cultured and the strong. Against any and all things which might lessen the appeal of Christianity to the masses Paul hurls himself in all his titanic strength. He knows that the religion of Jesus becomes the religion of simple folk, the ignorant, the humble, the childlike, more easily than of the gifted and the great. And he has manifest pleasure in this, for, says he, "God has chosen the foolish things of the world that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world that he might put to shame the things that are strong."¹¹

Just as the Jews sought constantly for "signs," so the Greeks wanted more than all else a secret and profound "wisdom," a knowledge that only the initiated can receive. In his hymn to Wisdom in First Corinthians, Paul is saying, We Christians have the supreme wisdom of God. Christianity is not a Mystery Religion, but its Gospel alone fully meets the needs which the Mysteries signify are there.

But the Corinthian Hymn to Wisdom in chapter one is followed by the superb Hymn to Love in chapter thirteen. The proud Corinthians were saying, "We know—we are the knowing ones." They had been freed from old superstitions; they knew that there was no God but one, and but one Lord, and one true faith which is the knowledge of God or Christianity. But their knowledge lacked love. They were substituting correct doctrine for a right spirit. They knew much *about* Jesus, but did they *know* Him? Paul says that to their knowledge must be added love. While saying some fine things about Christ and God, they were saying some rather un-Christian things about certain un-gifted brethren and about Paul himself. If they were living

¹¹ I Cor. 1:27-28.

by the mind of Christ would they say the things they are saying, either from pride in themselves or from disparagement of others? He says in effect, Unless the great things you are saying about Christ be said in love, they count for nothing.

V

In a second Logos passage, to which we now turn, Paul gives even a higher rating to Christ than in the one already cited. It is in his letter to the Colossians (1:15-17). He is writing of Christ the Redeemer:

*"Who is the image of God the unseen;
First born of all creation;
For in him were created all things
In the heavens and upon the earth,
The things seen and the things unseen,
Whether thrones or lordships or authorities or
potentates;
All things through him and unto him have
been created;
And all things consist in him."*

The idealistic Logos of the philosophers as a conception was great. But Christ, the creative Wisdom or Logos of God, is greater.

But the abruptness with which the apostle takes up the high theme and the suddenness with which he lays it down, seem to indicate that he is more concerned with Christ through whom God is making a new humanity, than in Christ as the Logos through whom God made the world. Probably the reason for his uttering such high words in exaltation of Christ, in the first place, was to answer the Greeks who sneered at the idea of a lowly Galilean peasant acclaimed the Divine One. Christ in creation interested him for the moment, but "Christ in you (Gentiles) the hope of glory" fascinated him endlessly. That was the divine and glorious "mystery" which had been revealed to

him. Christ is remaking the world through the new type of man He is making, who is neither Greek nor Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, or freeman, but *Christian*; the new man who puts off anger, wrath, malice, and all the works of the flesh, and puts on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, love, and all the works of the spirit. From men thus transformed a new humanity is to arise.

A third and most important of all Paul's Christological hymns is the so-called Kenosis passage in Philippians 2:6-11. It is later than those already cited and contains the most exalted conception of Christ to be found anywhere in Paul's writings. Here again he is pleading with them to have the mind which Christ had,

*"Who from the beginning existed in the form of God,
Yet, not regarding equality with God as something
at which he should grasp,
But emptying himself of his glory,
And taking the form of a servant,
He became a man like other men;
And being found in fashion as a man,
He humbled himself, even stooping to die,
And that to a death on the cross.
Because of this God also hath highly exalted him,
Conferring upon him the Name which is above every
name;
That in the name of Jesus every knee should bend
Of beings in the heavens, on the earth, and beneath
the earth,
And that every tongue should confess that Jesus
Christ is Lord to the glory of God the
Father."*

It is the picture of the pre-existent, Divine One of His own free choice coming low—"a picture on a grand scale of the truth that he that humbles himself shall be exalted." In the Colossian passage Paul links Jesus with the first creation as "one who was born first before all the creation." Therefore all the pre-eminence and privileges of the first-

born belong to Him. But this was the material creation. But then, he also links Him with the new creation as the supreme creative agent in it, "the first to be born from the dead." Through His resurrection He stands at the "beginning of a new creation."

In the Colossian passage Paul defines Christ as the one in whom and through whom God made the material universe. In the Philippian passage Christ is defined as the one in whom and through whom God is creating a new world; that world is the world within the Christian, and it must be depended upon to remake the world without.

VI

We have looked briefly at the exaltation of Christ at the hands of Paul to the supreme place in equality with God Himself.

Over against this exalted conception of the transcendent Christ it is interesting, indeed, to consider the oneness of Christ with the individual Christian. In these high visions of the Divine Christ has not Paul removed Christ far from the life of the common believer? No; "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" His answer is "nothing"; not even theology or the highest Christology.

Paul's Christology is more than counterbalanced by his Christ-mysticism; and this is nowhere better expressed than in his marvellous phrase "in Christ" and its variations. Paul writes "in Christ" thirty-four times, and "in Christ Jesus" thirty-nine times; and in a way identical in meaning with these he uses "in the Lord" no less than fifty times. These and many other expressions of similar import, such as "through Christ," "according to Christ," "with Christ," "because of Christ," "for Christ," "to Christ," and "through the spirit," "in the spirit," or "according to the spirit"—in all no less than two hundred times—and all setting forth the rare intimacy of Christ and the Christian. It is the intimacy of one person with another. The phrase "in the spirit" was an ancient Hebrew expression;

one who was "in the spirit" had the power of God upon him; in this state the seers saw their visions. With Paul and the Christians it took on a richer, if less supernatural, meaning as they applied it to Christ. So that the Old Testament phrase "in the spirit" is completely baptized into Paul's "in Christ," and that which was occasional and fitful in the old order, in the new becomes constant in the walk of the Christian.

Paul knew Jesus in a oneness that was wonderful, personal, close; knew Him as a person knows person, with a knowledge which love alone can give—a knowledge which is not history or theology, but friendship. "His oneness with his Lord was of a sort," says F. C. Porter, "that could and must, because of its inner nature, impart itself whole and entire to other men as their real new selves, Christ's self in them taking the place of the selfish, separate and separating self."¹² Christianity for Paul means simply this: the inner personal oneness of the Christian with Christ. But it does not stop there: Christ must control the Christian in all his thoughts and ways. "As many as are fully Christian, let this be our state of mind." In urging Christians to have the mind of Christ, Paul uses a word of many meanings; a word, it has been pointed out, that includes the Christian's thinking, his feeling, choice, purpose, the total attitude of his inner self, the personality, and above all, the Christian's attitude toward his fellow-men. Christians are God's epistles written for all men to read; they are to supplement the reconciling work which God did in Christ. The ministry of reconciliation is now ours. We are the ambassadors of Christ; God now entreats through us. Christians are a new creation, and the new world will be the kind of world which they create. The treasures of Christ have been lodged in the personalities of Christians. God's truth for the world is such as only personality can contain; God's message to the world is one which only personality can

¹² *The Mind of Christ in Paul*, p. 52.

impart. Christians can only give the message that is themselves.

This lofty conception of life Paul got from Jesus. The human Jesus filled his mind when he was enjoining Christians to have this mind. Paul may be called the humanizer of Jesus; not that he transformed Jesus, as some have claimed, but that he elucidated and appropriated Him. In no sense is it true that Paul substituted a religion about Christ for the religion of Christ.

The Christian's being "in Christ" is not a momentary loss of self-consciousness in a strange absorption in God, it is a lasting and ever-brightening life. The Christian walks "in the spirit" and lives his whole life "in Christ." There is the consciousness of being with and in Christ in all that he does. It is the kind of mysticism which continues the actual religious nature of all Christians. The Jesus of history becomes, in reality, Jesus in the Christian. It is the spirit-Christ who dwelt in Jesus and who through the spirit indwells the Christian—Jesus enfleshed, the Christ-personality embodied, expressed—"Christ in you the hope of glory."

Paul's Christ-mysticism is not the ethereal or impersonal sort with Christ as the life-element or mere atmosphere; it is of the personal, practical, spiritual nature. Far from being self-annihilation, it is self-realization. He is dead to the Law and alive unto a Person, Christ. It is the spirit of Christ, Christ Himself, who has entered into the Christian imparting righteousness and life. In Paul's faith Christ is indeed above, one to be worshipped; and the Christian's experience passes from worship to oneness, so that He is also within, creating in us His own likeness. The Christian is Christ's because the spirit of Christ is in him, and those in whom Christ does not dwell are not Christ's at all; for we know Christ only by means of an inner sympathy which reproduces Christ's likeness in us. For all his mysticism, Paul is everywhere and always a man of action. In his most mystical expression, "I live, no longer I, but Christ

lives in me,"¹³ there is no loss of personality, no sense of absorption in the Ineffable; only a lovely oneness which unites persons who love one another.

This divine experience inwrought in the Christian's life, as said before, has far-reaching effects, it does not remain simply as an individual treasure. It has social outreach and value. Christians are those in whom God is re-creating the world. Those who are "in Christ" have Christ's work to do. Christ has worked with God to make new men. Men must work with Him to make a new world. True Christian mysticism is of an active rather than a passive nature. Christians are united to one another in the inner oneness of love. "In Christ Jesus" is a glorious new realm in which all divisive things tend to vanish and leave all men equal and one before God. "Ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus," declares Paul. "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, no male and female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."¹⁴ Now this Christ-consciousness of the Christian becomes his self-consciousness.

VII

This brings me to consider the question of the ego in Paul's Christian experience. Are these high claims which Paul makes for the Christian, and for himself most of all, a mark of egotism? We have seen that much of Paul's writings are autobiographical, highly self-revealing, some of them self-assertive. It is indeed hard to assert one's self, even one's love, without a strain of self-love and self-regard seeming to come into the assertion. For the ordinary person, we may say, it cannot be kept out; but Paul is altogether extraordinary. He can do the impossible. But even he is aware of the danger. Yet, due to the nature of the new religion, which must express itself, if at all, through personality, which must be exemplified in the character of the Christian, Paul takes the risk. It is a difficult under-

¹³ Gal. 2:20.

¹⁴ Gal. 3:26, 28.

taking, but, like Jesus, who could claim for Himself the divinest prerogatives without arousing our sense of impropriety, so Paul achieves marvellously.

But what about Paul's glorying? As a Jew he had gloried in his sense of superiority; but Christians are not those who feel superior: Christ has brought their glorying to an end. How is it, then, that Paul still will glory? Only because others glory against him. Though it is foolish, says he, to do so, "yet will I glory after a fashion, but it will be in the very things that others despise." He will glory in weakness, in such things as crosses, in crucifixions, in sufferings of all sorts. "If I must needs glory, I will glory in the things that concern my weakness." "Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world."¹⁵

They made light of his weakness, his enemies did; and on the ground of his sufferings, questioned his authority as an apostle. Was not one who suffered so much obviously in the disfavour of God? But Paul can turn tragedy into triumph; "for when I am weak, then am I strong." Anyway, he says all these things about himself not for himself, but for *them*; says them "in Christ." His apologizing, his self-defense, far from being an expression of his ego, is a testimony breathed in wondrous love in behalf of the dear cause of Christ. It comes not from a nature essentially proud, but from one which has "in Christ" come to be lovingly lowly. That this is true surely a sympathetic and unprejudiced mind can see. In this, too, he has the mind which was in Christ Jesus. The lowliness of the Christ-mind meant to Paul "such loss of self as makes possible the incoming of the other world into our nature."

The apostle's detractors at Corinth pointed to certain things that seemed to disqualify him for leadership of a church of cultured Greeks, to say nothing of the Church of

¹⁵ Gal. 6:14.

God as a whole: his unimpressive personal appearance, his bluntness of speech, his lack of oratorical powers, the absence in his thought of philosophy and current literary ideas; also his humility, his seeming lack of dignity in not receiving a salary, but working with his own hands for his living, his arrests, disgraces, imprisonments, the toils and tortures that had filled his days, the weak, sore eyes, his "thorn in the flesh" which seemed to mark him out for the displeasure of God. All this, and more, comes out in Second Corinthians 10-13. The passage is not only a classic of personal defence on the part of Paul; it is a superb preaching of Christ. Even in preaching himself Paul preached Christ. In this, as in the case of those who preached a Christ of divisiveness, he would rejoice, for the reason that in and through it all—*Christ was preached*.

Egotism in Paul? Nay, unselfishness! He opens his heart to those who love him that they might see Christ's way of life. To those who did not love him he bared his soul that they might know him for just what he was. What he was, he passionately owned, was due to Christ. He believed himself to be like Christ. He had spared no pains to know what Christ was like. His claim to apostleship rested upon that knowledge. He claimed to have nothing which he did not get from Christ. He knew himself the leader of the Christian forces with certain powers, rights, and liberties; yet he demanded nothing for himself—only that the truth of Christ and the freedom of Christians might be maintained.

Christ's followers, he maintained, himself and the Christians, were Christ's writing; and no writings about Christ can approach in value the living reproductions of Christ in human lives. Egotism? The great apostle of a great new freedom freely foregoes all things, even freedom itself, standing not upon his own rights, but wisely, lovingly, enslaving himself to men, becoming all things to all, that he might gain all for Christ. He owns himself the slave of men, but more of Jesus, "your slave because of Jesus." He

has broken with the slavery of the Law only to become the slave of Jesus, but enslavement to Jesus, says Paul, is the truest freedom.

Of this Christian freedom there is no better example than Paul's principle—becoming all things to all men that he might by every means save some. Although he is free from all, he willingly subjects himself to all, because freedom, which the Christian has without limitation—“*all things are ours*”—must be kept sweetly subservient to the love of Christ.

Here is an example of the principle. The Christian's liberty as to things to be eaten, as to days or seasons to be kept, as to rites to be observed, is complete; but such liberty may easily become a stumbling-block to the weak. Nothing but the love of Christ can prevent it. Hear him: “If meat make my brother to stumble (to violate his own tender conscience), I will eat no flesh forevermore that I make not my brother to stumble.”¹⁶ Here is a thing in itself lawful to the liberated spirit, but inexpedient, not Christian, not kind, under the circumstances. It is the acme of unselfishness, this act of Paul's, therefore, Christ-like. To give up power which is rightly one's own is not the submission of weakness, but the self-sacrifice of strength.

VIII

That “Paul's eye is on ends, not beginnings,” is explained by his profound new inner experience. Whatever the humiliations, disgraces, and reverses of the present, the future cannot but be glorious. Nor does he allow selfishness, which has been shut out by his great experience with Christ, to slip in again through the hope of future rewards, but Christ and the Christians have the ultimate power of the universe on their side. To them “all things work together for good.” This is the secret of Paul's attitude of Stoic superiority to all outward and temporal things. Does weakness, poverty, pain, nothingness mark the Christian's outward lot? He,

¹⁶ I Cor. 8:3.

despite them all, is in possession of a power that can triumph over them.

In Philippians, Paul speaks of the "all things" which constituted his "loss" in becoming a Christian. In First Corinthians (chap. 3) he talks ecstatically about the "all things" which constitute the "gains" of the Christian life. In Second Corinthians (6:9-10) it is interesting to hear him contrasting the gains and losses of his new life with manifest pride in the "losses:" "*As unknown, and well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and possessing all things.*" All things belong to God, but if to God then to Christ, and if to Christ then to the Christian; and the Christian is Christ's and Christ is God's, all are one in the oneness of the spirit.

Because Paul has his eye on ends rather than beginnings, he can say: "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound: in everything and in all things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want."¹⁷—His declaration of independence from things. Well does he know the paradoxical truth about life's real treasures; as with Christ, so with the Christian—to be gained, they must be given up; to be kept, they must be lost; life, in order to be saved, must be sacrificed! Paul is the living embodiment of that hard teaching of Jesus, "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." All this Paul got from Jesus.

Manifestly, to understand the personality of Paul is to sense the spirit of Christ; to know Paul is to know Christ, for Christ is the very centre and soul of Paul. Through Paul we know who Christ is, through him we know what the Christian is. Paul reflects Christ; *he is the Christian*. And he does all his thinking about the Christ of Christian faith in the light of the Jesus of history.

¹⁷ Phil. 4:11-12.

X

A PILGRIM OF THE INFINITE

I

MYSTICISM, in the ordinary sense of the term, is neither a morbid freak nor the sole true fruit of religion. Mysticism, so-called, has not always been healthy or sane. But Pauline mysticism has nothing in it of the bizarre or abnormal.

This is not to say that there is nothing uncanny, nothing weird, nothing eerie, even, in the experience of the sense of God's presence as set forth by Paul. There is. There are those moments of high feeling, known to all deeply religious spirits, in which the awful presence of God smites the soul.

One such basic moment in our experience is that when the soul is bowed speechless in worship. In Christian worship it invades the mind mightily in such words as "Holy, holy, holy." It may steal upon one almost unobserved "as the gentlest of agitations, a mere fleeting shadow passing across the mood." Or, it may come with that sense of God's "overpoweringness" occupying the mind with a well-nigh bewildering strength, leading on to transport and ecstasy of soul. But in either case the mind is pervaded with a tranquil mood of deepest worship.

These basic moments of high feeling need not be experiences of a fitful and passing nature. They may pass over, as indeed they do in the case of all devout Christians, into set and lasting attitudes of the soul, continuing increasingly vibrant and resonant in the daily life.

In its first stages deep mystical experience often has in it not only the element of God's overpoweringness, but of

His utter unapproachability, as well. So felt Isaiah in the temple. So felt Job following an experience of the majesty of God in which he wrote himself down as "dust and ashes" to be "abhorred."

Christian mysticism retains something of this awful majesty when the element of unapproachability has receded and died away. It has, however, nothing of the terrifying and fearful in it. The shudder and dread and tremour of the flesh-creeping experience characteristic of primitive religion on its lowest and earliest levels is no part of religion in its higher and purer stages. Here, instead, it knows a peace that passes understanding, and of which the tongue can only stammer brokenly. Its possessor can as little tell it as he can touch the sky with his hand. It humbles and at the same time exalts him. It circumscribes yet extends him beyond himself.

This experience produces in the possessor religious humility. Sometimes he feels himself "dust and ashes"—*nothingness!* It was this precisely that made Paul say to the Corinthians, "Christ is all, I am nothing." But hearts poor in humility and Christian love cannot understand speech that is rich in these elements. So the "profane" Corinthians misunderstood and misrepresented Paul. Reading into his humble and seemingly self-deprecating words a stupid and cruel literalness, they said, "Paul is a nobody." Did they not have it from his own lips? They spoke the language of vulgar materialism which, in its "scientific" manner takes the fact of religious experience and rolls it out, so to speak, so thin and flat as to eliminate it altogether.

It goes almost without saying that sin is a large element in any true mystical experience. In the presence of the "wholly Other," man is stricken and crushed. In the Old Testament it often produces a *stupor*, a blank wonder, an astonishment that strikes the experient dumb. When it elicits speech it is the speech of dire confession, such as that of Isaiah already referred to. "I am a man of *unclean* lips," he said. With piercing acuteness he felt himself profane.

He also felt the profaneness of those around him. He dwelt amid "a people of unclean lips."

This sin element in the experience of God is seen also in the New Testament. When something of the true nature of Jesus breaks on the consciousness of Peter he cries, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Now Peter does not want Christ to depart from him; of all things not that. What he really wants is that his (Peter's) uncleanness, his unholiness, shall be taken away, so that he may stand clean and whole before God. It is the natural recoil of the creature suddenly become conscious that it is face to face with its creator. Peter, in that moment, sensed Christ as something and Someone "wholly other" than himself. He felt his own "unworth" and incompleteness.

Man wants to feel whole and to feel his worth. His sense of lack in the presence of the Divine is the basis and beginning of atonement (man's at-one-ment with God). When this lack is met, both the Sonhood of man and the Fatherhood of God are experienced as realities in the soul. We do not have to understand God to feel at one with Him. It has been well said that a God comprehended would be no God. God is within the reach of our conceiving, but is beyond the grasp of our comprehension. Hence man at his best is religious, is mystical. But just as Christ was more concerned to reveal the Father than to define Him, so Paul was more concerned to preach Christ than to define Him. Whilst Christian systematizers have drawn from Paul a body of doctrine variously called "Christology," "Theology," or "Mysticism," Paul was a missionary who had neither the time nor the inclination to systematize his faith. Above all, he wanted his converts to have "the mind of Christ." This was more important than that they should have a correct conception of what He is.

II

Very many there are today who live in "sums and dividends and secular realities" who cannot appreciate the

mystic in Paul. Their lives consist in hard, drab facts unenriched by any sublime illusions. They have shaken all the star-dust off their visions—if visions they ever had—and steeped themselves in the metallic spirit of this present world.

This is materialism. But “materialism,” says the Oxford biologist, John Scott Haldane—after noting that it was once a scientific theory, and is now the fatalistic creed of thousands—“materialism is nothing better than superstition on the same level as belief in witches and devils.”¹ The materialist has only sight, the mystic insight. The mystic is greater than the materialist by so much as insight is greater than mere sight. “We all know,” says Eddington, “that there are regions of the human spirit untrammelled by the world of physics. In the mystic sense of the creation around us, in the expression of art, in a yearning toward God, the soul grows upward and finds the fulfilment of something implanted in its nature.” This “sanction of a striving in the consciousness,” he continues, “is proof enough of the world of the spirit.”² Just as in mathematics we are influenced by some innate sense of the fitness of things, so in religious experience, though it is not proof of the same sort. But “proof,” says Eddington again, “is an idol before whom the pure mathematician tortures himself.”³ But at any rate the mathematician has method in his madness, while the mystic is gloriously method-less.

Mystical religion may be a kind of illusion which the soul weaves, but it is the guarantor of reality. This sort of illusion, to call it that, is to reality what smoke is to the fire. Those endowed with Hamiltonian earth-wisdom will keep on saying that it is disgraceful for “a man with six sober senses and a scientific understanding” to let himself be deluded by such an illusion; yet there will always be a

¹ *Scribner's Magazine*, Feb., 1930, p. 128.

² *The Nature of the Physical World*, p. 327. The Macmillan Company. Used by permission.

³ *Op. Cit.*, p. 337.

multitude who profess to hear an unearthly music which mystical experience enables them to catch:

*The isle is full of noises,
Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twanging instruments
Will hum about mine ears; and sometimes voices."*

There have been in every age many who refused to see in life anything romantic. They discredit the mystic insight by which some claim to lay hold of the world beyond the world. They sneer at the idealism which extends life into the eternities. They are professedly of the earth earthy, and propose to get theirs while the getting is good. You can present Christ's ideal of life and urge them—

*E'er it vanishes
O'er the margin,
After it, follow it,
Follow the gleam"—*

but they consider it "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." They go bartering the sacred for the secular, letting the secular alone minister to their life, permitting the spiritual in them to come to itself not at all.

We live in an age which for religious genius cannot at all be compared with ages past. Dr. Frederich Rittlemeyer has said that ours is not a religious age. "We men of this present age permit ourselves to spend our whole strength on external things. The life outside us draws us incessantly away from the life within us." How completely we live for outward and alien things! Dr. Rittlemeyer continues, "Our serious occupations are all with the external, and there we seek, also, our recreations. . . . The wealth and variety of the things we know and can do is out of all proportion to the poverty of spirit that stares us in the face when we are left alone. We have all gone astray and lost our way in things material—the scholar in his investigations,

the politician in his campaigns, the merchant in his business. The challenge to which our age has responded is to the conquest of the outer world.”⁴ Most will agree that this is a trenchant putting of the truth. Whether one agrees with this writer’s concluding word, “this is its badge of destruction,” or not, is another matter.

III

But in spite of himself, man lives in two realms. These two realms—the material and the mystic—are antipathetic. They stand one over against the other. Their existence disturbs man’s peace and their rivalry causes man’s struggle. It is not a case of one or the other. Both realms are real. Man is impaled upon the horns of a dilemma. If it could be found that one or the other of these realms was unreal, then man’s greatest dilemma would be effectually de-horned.

It is not the office of mysticism to deny that the objective world is real, but to affirm that the subjective world is as much or more of a reality. It may be easier for the average man to realize his body than to recognize his soul—for the reason that the outer world is plainer, more marked, than the inner—but man at his best is haunted by the outreachings of the soul, by memories of a spiritual homeland. He cannot forget his dream. Man’s soul, the Zion of his dear hopes, languishes a prisoner in the Babylon of his body and its objective world; but in this Babylon the lovers of Zion can still sing their songs, for deliverance is just ahead.

True, man lives in two worlds—“The one the perfect world of inner illumination and the other an imperfect world of outer sense”—but the one does not preclude the other; in fact, each includes the other. It comes about, then, that man who lives fullest in both worlds lives the fullest of lives—and the most tragic. But he only is a full-orbed man. Such a man was Paul of Tarsus. If forgetful for an hour of the outer world, he sometimes followed his “soul’s

⁴ *Behold the Man*, p. 148. The Macmillan Company. Used by permission.

enchanted feet along the path of mystic certainty," it was not that "mystic certainty" was for him the only kind of certainty. Objective reality was its corollary, and just as real.

And yet—Paul was not a votary of the cult of objectivity; he of all men was not. To the extent to which he was free from it—to that extent was he a free man. This is not to say that he was an addict of the realm of subjectivity, either; rather he was its anxious devotee. And yet—for him mysticism was not a mechanism by means of which the real might escape the unreal. He was a dreamer, but no neurotic. He was a poet, but not pathological; not a pervert in whom the sex instinct had been repressed. Nor was religion to him merely "ethics tinged with emotion."

Yes, man, to be a full-orbed man, human and divine, must live in two worlds; and the price he must pay is that of sublime tragedy. The perfect inner world and the imperfect outer world—forever opposed, antipathetic, contradictory—will war in him one against the other. But this he must not mind, since to achieve full manhood man must have tragedy.

There are those who think to achieve the highest by following one line or the other, the way of the mystic or the way of the materialist. The one group is like Gautama Buddha, fanatics frantic in their pursuits of the mystic way whose ultimate goal is annihilation or, at best, absorption in the Absolute. The other is like Neitzsche; they would make man into the image of the earth, powerful, attractive, conquering, but with the "face of God scrubbed out." To neither of these extremes ran Paul. His gift of vision is balanced by his grasp of facts. If his eyes are on the stars, his feet are on the ground. He transmutes the "sacred secrets" of the "third heaven" into the everyday deeds of life. Pauline mysticism is not sterile meditation, but productive inspiration. It is not passive, but active. No career in history is a better instance of the transmission of mysticism into actual life than Paul's. Little ethical sections full

of practical maxims for everyday life, appended at the end of his most speculative and mystical epistles, support this claim. Both Romans and Ephesians begin in speculation and end with words remarkable for their common sense. It is but the truth to say, as Peabody does, that his "is a religion of sanctified sanity and illuminated common sense."⁵

Having envisaged perfection within his soul, Paul yearned to have it in his body, but could never achieve it—here. He felt the two hostile worlds brought together within, and himself the victim of their strife. Reason and truth alone—and to him Christ was both Reason and Truth personalized and powerful to deliver—could disentangle man's two worlds one from the other. But if man might not have perfection he might have peace. The entrance of Christ might not reduce the struggle, might heighten it, in fact, but peace amid strife will ensue. When Christ comes, man no longer lives in a muddled maze of confusion. Strife there may be, but it is the strife of light, not of darkness.

IV

Paul was one who kept his life unfenced on the side of the spiritual. He was a spirit equipped with archangelic plumes, a paradisal dweller; his imagination took wings; his vision broke terrestrial bonds; yet in his day he gave forth spiritual and social health as flowers exhale aroma in a swamp.

Need it be said now that Paul was the mystic *par excellence* of the early Church? No need to deny—nor is it desirable—that he keenly felt the longing of the mystic heart:

*"I stifle here in this narrow place,
Sick for the infinite fields of space."*

We must define our term. The world of the metaphysical mystic which is a furnace in which the soul, hating the body,

⁵ *The Apostle Paul and the Modern World*, p. 221.

struggles in an unearthly passion to release itself, was not his world, though in his eyes, set within the deep bony sockets, there burned the fires of life beyond death. While his was an intelligence sustained by constant and familiar commerce with realities, yet if ever the restrictions of matter have been abolished; if ever the mystic vision of life has been expressed in graphic living and language, it was in the life and language of Paul. His last musings upon immortality have the power to create in us certain inchoate yearnings to dissolve the bonds of the flesh and dwell in the world of pure spirit. In him the mystic vision is intense, pure, and magnificently articulate.

The realist sees things just as they appear to eyes and ears attuned to the practical, temporal world; the spiritualist (using the term in its better sense) sees things as they appear to the inner intuitions in touch with the spiritual, eternal world. Markham's lines in his poem *Israfel* are true of Paul:

"He walked our streets as on a lonely strand,

His country was not here; it was afar.

Not here his home, not here his motherland,

But in some statelier star.

"Life was his exile, earth his alien shore,

And these were foreign faces that he passed;

For he had other language, other lore,

And he must home at last."

There is no stadium to house the heavenly steeds; they tread the clouds, and are never so much at home as in the ethereal heights. And the gallant riders!—aye, they are cramped and made not a little lonesome by earth.

Admittedly, there are times when Paul seems none too friendly with the *here* and *now*.—Times when he appears to think of man's existence here as but an iridescent gleam. In this he has points of kinship with all the great mystics of the ages; but he was something sager, more far-seeing

than most of them. Even when he was actually in the vale of trial, yet in the realm of his spirit he was climbing the green hill of serenity; he carried April blithesomeness into December's chill and cloud. Now and then his faith became fleet-footed, grew wings, he soared and searched the beatific heights.

One such experience as the above-mentioned was his third-heaven experience.⁶ He was uplifted to where he viewed the ramparts of a world not human. For a time his spirit roamed the white fields of the air, and scaled the dazzling pyramids of light—but to dash back to heavy-footed earth the while. And when he had been let down again he found his senses drowsy and his lips dumb; they refused to tell what he had seen. Whatever can be made of this naïve experience, it teaches us, as it the more convinced the apostle, that—

*“There is a deep below the deep,
And a height beyond the height,
And our hearing is not hearing,
And our seeing is not sight.”*

It is a truly blessed thing to be able to leave the ground now and then and find oneself in the skies. It helps one's appreciation of both heaven and earth, which thing many a wise realist will say is an insidious Orientalism. But the real ostrich with his head in the sand is the man who buries his life in the immediate and refuses to look at the horizons about him.

*“Pity the soul that never sees
The stars beyond the cypress trees.”*

No doubt such a celestial look does make our earth seem ghostly foul. Perhaps it tends to make the beholder a little pessimistic concerning things in this mundane sphere; we see the tendency at work in Paul; but such experiences

⁶ II Cor. 12:2-4.

made the apostle mighty and sweetly solemnizing in soul. None can doubt the power of Paul's wings to transport him into the heavenlies. His imagination did not hesitate to storm the gates of the farthest ether. To his strong pinions mystic flights were commonplaces. The company of the sun had no terror for his eagle heart. So once and again he sought the heights; explored the happy haunts of the cherubim and seraphim, leaving the world of men and things far behind.

v

If by "mystic" is meant one who realizes eternity in time, Paul was a mystic—one of the greatest of them. But if to be a mystic means the achievement of unity with the Ineffable, which means annihilation of the self of man and absorption in the Divine, then Paul was no mystic. Certainly he was not a mystic in the pagan or Hindu or Buddhist sense. He sought for oneness of spirit, unity of purpose, fusion of mind with Christ. Yes, Paul was a true mystic—an expectant person who had the consciousness of divine invasion. Though he saw the "flesh" as an enemy of the "spirit," he did not look on life with loathing, as many an Eastern mystic has done.

Some hold that there is an element of asceticism in all saintliness, and that Paul is no exception. However, his was not that asceticism so common in religious history. Above all, his was not the asceticism which is born of metaphysical dualism and despises the body. Jesus was never accused of possessing the ascetic ideal; He was charged with sensuousness, in fact. If Paul goes further towards asceticism than his Master, it is no great way further. Though he recoiled from the sensuality of the cities in which he laboured, yet he had nothing in common with those who adopted the cowardly policy of "touch not, taste not, handle not."

World-renunciation ends in barren asceticism unless it is corrected and supplemented by world-participation. Re-

nunciation alone means spiritual suicide, while participation in the world without renunciation of the world works spiritual death. Many extrovert Christians—those who think only in terms of serving the world—in the very process of their serving, are making their souls shallow and empty. But self-renunciation, as Jesus preached it and embodied it, ends in self-realization. True mysticism, whether in Paul or any other, ends not in quietism, but in quest.

It has been said that most of us are the bell-hops of our appetites. Not so Paul; he had learned to say "No" to the immediate, in order to say "Yes" to the imperishable. He frowned alike on Epicureanism—the body as an end, and on Asceticism—the body as an enemy. The body as a servant makes life sane; the body as a ruler makes life asinine.

The mystic, as Rufus M. Jones has been telling us, is a person with a single eye, a one-thing person marching to the mystic motto, "this one thing I do." He is a person of a single interest and refuses to be swerved from his quest by secondary appeals or side issues. Paul's singleness of aim which in the Epistle to the Philippians he propounds and everywhere practices, makes for concentration of purpose and conservation of energy. If he makes small place in his life for nature, art, and philosophy—and it is admitted that he does—it is because he is so intensely given over to religion.

The true mystic is one who *sees* where others grope. He is not only certain that he has found what he has been seeking, but is gifted with the ability to plant that same sort of certitude in the hearts of others. Like the mountain climber who has reached his peak, to use a figure from Dr. Jones, "the sight itself is convincing." He slowly acquires a sense of moral direction; his intuition of what is right *for him and others* amounts to a revelation. Like Paul in his third-heaven experience, he has seen what he has seen, and he can make you feel that he has *seen*; but "in its first-hand quality of acquaintance it forever remains just his incommunicable experience." These "visitations from

a better world" every seeker after God at times has surely had, but each must have them for himself, else he will not so much as know what Paul is talking about. We probably do not need a better statement of what mystical religion really is than this: An over-brimming experience of contact, a rich fellowship, and spiritual union with the larger Life which impinges on our own life. The *Theologia Germanica* states naïvely that man was created with one eye for seeing temporal and created things, and with another eye for seeing into eternity, and that one of these eyes must close if the other is to see its object. If this be so, it would seem that multitudes of men today are seeing only with the eye that sees the material, and have gone blind in that which was given them to behold eternity. One must hope, however, that this is only a seeming; and that even most modern men have occasional contact with the "realm of the spirit beyond the frontiers of the seen and the tangible." For, perceived or unperceived, it is *there*; there as surely as suns and planets, molecules and microbes are a real part of our material world, though we have no adequate organs of perception. We have no eyes to see electrons or molecules, but we are not so foolish as to say that there are none. Just as we know the influence of powerful stars which we cannot see with the unaided physical eye, so are we convinced that back of "the soul's invincible surmise" lies a spirit World and Power which are no less real for being invisible. Such mystics as Paul are gifted, as Rufus M. Jones has said, with the marvellous antennæ of instincts that can feel out beyond the limiting barriers and discover what the beyond is like. Their contact with what lies in the realm beyond the world of eyes, ears, and finger-tips is reassuring and real. All such can say:

*"Thou life within my life, than self more near,
Thou veiled Presence, infinitely clear;
From all illusive shows of sense I flee
To find my centre and my rest in Thee."*

Perhaps never to any man did the mystery which is God enshrine itself more deeply than in the life of Paul. His was a hearing sufficiently acute to catch every whisper of God in his soul. The brilliance of the light from Christ which flooded him, enabled him instinctively to throw a glamour over the whole of everyday life, lighting up even its drabness with a glory that was unearthly. The frequency with which he uses the phrase "in Christ" declares the element in which he moves. Nor is this a mere metaphor; it is Pauline mysticism. None knew better than he,

*"That very near about us lies
The realm of spiritual mysteries.
The sphere of the supernal powers
Impinges on this world of ours."*

Those two matchless lines in Edna St. Vincent Millay's poem "Renascence,"

*"The soul can split the sky in two
And let the face of God shine through,"*

state better than a volume on mysticism what the soul of the poetic and worshipful person can do. But this is not the mood of the "practical" man of "common-sense" who lives strictly by the five senses; it is the prerogative of the spiritual man who is able to project himself into the subjective world splitting space-time in twain.

The definition of a mystic as a philosopher turned lover also fits the case of Paul. Here was one of the keenest minds of history falling in love with a Man whom he ecstatically calls Master and Lord. His illumination on the Damascus road was the beginning of a deathless friendship between persecutor and Persecuted—a friendship which life ripened and death rewarded.

Bishop McConnell may be right when he asserts that "Mysticism is like radium, enormously powerful and incredibly beneficial for mankind—and excessively dangerous." But if the mystic be at the same time a prophet, as

Paul was, with a keen awareness of moral values and their practical outworkings in society, he is saved from the soggy impractical life into which pure undisciplined mysticism tends to run. Paul, though at times he trod the strange edge of the psychic life, though his soul sometimes made sudden sallies across and beyond the border of reality, was never the impractical mystic. He was no psychopathic person. He did not traffic in the weird or occult. He did not profess to have private and esoteric information concerning divine things. He was no purveyor of secret mysteries. It is obvious that all mystical experiences or any unspeakable heavenly uplift, to have any objective value or testable reality, must somehow get correlated with the total whole of man's life. Though to limit all mystical experience to the field of the objective and scientifically testable is to unnecessarily cramp and contract that field. The instruments for testing truth in the field of science quickly lose their precision when applied to the realm of the spirit.

Theirs is a distorted judgment who accuse Paul of living in a visionary world. True, there were times when the real world would have none of him. Then he would take flight into the world where dreams count as facts. He was ever and again lifting his vision in the effort to sight and ensnare some new revelation of truth from the celestial shore. His experience of being caught up to the celestial heights where he walked down the Milky Way of Paradise reads like a statement of calm fact.⁷ At all events, the springs of his imagination were touched and he was borne aloft in a vision which was both an escape and a fulfilment.

This in no way resembles the Buddhist's dream of Nirvana, which is escape from life, extinction. Their hope was voiced in the words: "We live in lofty delight; bliss in our food as it is of the shining gods." Original Buddhism lacked nothing of purity, or rapture, or harmlessness; but it lacked the love that transforms the world. The Buddhist

⁷ II Cor. 12:2-4.

says, escape the world and go hence to Nirvana—longing stilled, desire silenced. The Christian says (and Paul was the typical Christian), change this world, turn it into the kingdom of God. He is alive with the sense of cosmic mission. The Buddhist ideal is wanting in life, is death. The Christian ideal, being cosmic creativeness, is life itself.

Paul was a Christian mystic, with emphasis on the “Christian,” what the term meant in primitive Christianity. And yet, as heretofore seen, he was a practical mystic, one who translated his bold idealism into the cold realism of everyday life about him. He took one of the richest spiritual experiences of history and linked it with the social, ethical, and practical aspects of life. His was *applied* mysticism; no other kind can be of value. Even science is of importance only as it is applied; in no other way can it be sure of survival.—And in no other way can religion be sure of survival.

In reality, the threads of Paul’s mystical and practical life were finely intermingled. This was as it should be, for it is thus that the most normal Christian character is formed. If on occasion he mounted up where he saw ineffable things, where he had most intimate communings with the Most High, they were visions of a most practical value for the life he lived *in the world*. Perhaps he understood earth the better for his intimate acquaintance with heaven. Like canny little John Wesley, he knew how to use his head to make his dreams come true. There have been too many mystics who could not do that.

On many points Paul’s mysticism does not outrun his practicality, but for all his practicality, he is the born poet with a brain teeming with ideas, a brain which plays in the grand manner around grand themes. At the other extreme, there have ever been great multitudes of persons who, like the man Esau, were blessed with all practicality, who just because of that were never lifted into the third heaven where their eyes were baptized with sights unportrayable. Jacob was none too spiritual, but he did on occasion glimpse

the angels—Esau never did. Living his hard life in a hard age, Paul caught from Christ the lilting habit of carrying a bit of eternity in his heart while he went about the none too pleasant tasks of time. He learned how to transfigure drab deeds and make them luminous with the divine shining. He became a conqueror in the realm of the spirit, could follow the trail of the star while battling with things as they are.

This made it possible for him to leap over, or to miss seeing at all, high frowning mountains of *impedimenta*. If he carried *this* world heavily on his heart, likewise he carried the *beyond* within him. This last made the first possible, made it easy, in fact. For those for whom

*“Ever and anon a trumpet sounds
From the hid battlements of eternity,”*

are thereby fortified to stand the universe and all its hardness.

Mystical experience, it is certain, brings to the possessor a “vastly increased stock of energy to live by.” What William James said of St. Loyola is even truer of St. Paul: “His mysticism made him assuredly one of the most powerfully practical human engines that ever lived.” Paul had what Baron von Hugel calls “overflowing interior plenitude,” which was in him an organizing, energizing, procreating force which made him one of history’s greatest achievers. Under the impact of this force, Paul became a troubadour of the love of God which issued in self-sharing and love-sharing on an amazing scale. This force enabled him to go forward beyond the old frontiers, and then help his fellows to come to his height. In the might of a powerful spiritual “up-welling,” and by a message in which the “prophet-element” is manifest, he helped the race to pass from spiritual twilight to full day-dawn—one of the greatest achievements ever made by any man. It is thus that Paul or any one becomes an “inspired revealer,” and feels himself the responsive organ of the Living Spirit. Paul was a humanist, knew human nature, and walked with his feet on

the ground; he was a mystic, perceived divine things, and walked with his head in the clouds.

VI

We do well to ask why it is that Paul presents so perfect a type of mystical experience? The customary answer, of course, will be that it was due to his vivid and vital fellowship with Christ. But why did Christ make such an impression on Paul? Such music is due, surely, not only to the rare skill of the Musician, but to some unusual quality in the instrument. Paul possessed one of the richest emotional natures ever bestowed upon a man. Modern psychology is beginning to value anew the supreme importance of emotion in life. If life is flat it is because the emotions have been repressed or starved to death. Where there is no emotion there is no soul, no life; emotion is the blood of the soul, the stuff of life. Without it there is no urge to think, no will to be, no pulse in the body, no stirring life purpose. Emotion is the very flame of the human spirit; it makes the eye gleam with glory; it quickens the pulse, making it quiver like a tuned harp under the fingers of life; it purifies the heart, clarifies the brain, causing it to pour itself out in painted fresco, moving symphony, and singing poetry. Emotion is the womb of creativeness, and genius is its child. Under its spell Michael Angelo painted, Beethoven composed, Browning sang, and Lincoln lived.

Emotion made Paul immortal. He had an amazing stock of this strange, warm force imprisoned in him. His life was a masterpiece, and like all masterpieces, whether of art or personality, it sprang from the pitch of emotion. Fed by the moving drama of Christ's life and death, the sea of ecstasy within him now and then burst its dykes and flowed exuberantly. Sometimes his brain reels under its vaporous touch. He is a veritable human dynamo, a sparkling and effervescent spirit, his soul a great ache of devotion.

Heretofore, I have referred to Paul as an introvert. Introvert and extrovert are terms used by the psychologists to

mark the character of mental processes: those who respond to inward and those who turn to outward interests. The one is objective, the other emphatically subjective. The mental process of the one is centrifugal, the other centripetal. The extrovert type is alert to all the outward influences about him; the introvert is all wrapped up in what takes place within his inner emotions and sensations. To this we attribute Paul's lack of interest in nature.

While Paul was no impractical dreamer, he was gloriously otherworldly. If he was totally indifferent to the "pay" of this life, he was fascinated by the "reward" of the life to come. He thought of his huge sacrifices and colossal labours as investments made in time which would return rich spiritual dividends in eternity.

So we come now to deal with another of Paul's great ideas—his system of future rewards and punishments. This conception roots in his mysticism and fruits in his ethics. Some have criticized it as childish. They say that the hereafter which he has designed for himself is based on an infantile system of rewards and penalties; that this "acquisitive immortality" is born of self-interest and bred in self-conceit; that it bears the taint of ancient and sordid motives of the race; that it has none of the altruism of that more noble and practical immortality through which earthly life strives to leave a worthy influence for the benefit of those who later follow the path of human experience.

Admitted that the apostle did sponsor this doctrine; it has also to be admitted that never was man more altruistic or unselfish than he. To call this "reward-morality" is to miss the point. Some have gone so far as to claim that the Christian religion, following Paul, is founded on reward-morality, and that its motivation is of a low type. There is a reward element in the Christian religion and in Paul, but Christianity is not reward-morality. It is love-morality. Paul does not depart from Jesus here. He knew how to renounce on a lower level in order to realize on a higher. He grew great by inward renunciation. By faith he

finances his future; by faith and Christly deeds filled celestial coffers with riches that endure. His motive, however, was not to *get*, but *give*—the keynote of a Golden Age, but he knew that in giving all for Christ, as Christ Himself had said, was the one sure way to get all *himself*. Thus Paul, who must be rated as one of the most practical men of affairs the world has ever seen, went about his work as one who heard—

“Disjoined notes of some supernal choir.”

He follows the itinerary of the passionate pilgrim, he will not untie the latchet of his shoe until he has reached the house of peace. As in love and friendship he was all ardour, so in his pursuit of truth he became a very flame. His spirit, avid of happiness, could find satisfaction only in Christ, the Revealer of God. Every time the thought of Christ, ascended and victorious, entered his heart, his whole being would quiver with an almost intolerable sense of tenderness and longing. His spiritual insight has the power to beget in us the vision of Francis Thompson:

*“O world invisible, we view thee;
O world intangible, we touch thee;
O world unknowable, we know thee;
Inapprehensible, we clutch thee.”*

VII

Let us ask, What relation, if any, does Paul’s Christ-mysticism bear to the sacraments, so stressed by the Church of a later day? The true answer is that it was neither induced nor maintained by any kind of cult-act. The “sacramental system,” or the use of material objects, agents, and acts as instruments of grace and salvation, did not come from Paul. For him, God’s altar is the obedient heart. He was one of a multitude in every age who, without rite or sacrament, see the things that are invisible. To him, joy or sorrow, or “the meteor-flash of intuition” were sacraments better than all sacral acts.

In Paul's thought the Christian life begins in a mystic act of justification by faith and by acts of faith rather than cult-acts is nourished throughout life. He was no sacramentarian. To him, all life was a sacrament. "Whether we eat or whether we drink and *everything* we do, do all unto the Lord." He saw in the Lord's Supper simply a command to memorialize, not the Divine Presence localized as in the "consecrated Host" of the Catholic Church. Nor did he conceive baptism as a rebirth, as most of the Mysteries did; it was a mystic death. "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to evangelize," he asserts. For him, magical cult-acts as vehicles of grace had no value. It was the ethical-mystic experience to which he attached great importance.

While Paul and the Mysteries alike make use of certain great words such as: *soteria*, *mysterion*, *pneumatikos*, *pneuma*, and *Nous*, the apostle charges them with new and richer connotations, rechristening them in the Name of Christ.

With Paul, Gnosis overshadows sacrament; his faith is of an intellectual order; and yet salvation by knowledge, as taught by the Gnostics, he repudiates. Gnostic salvation was for the privileged few, not for the many, for all men have not Gnosis, though all should have Gnosis. There was no need, in the Gnostic view, of a personal Redeemer; men were saved by culture, and ignorance was the only barrier. With this Paul had no patience. Between these competing schemes—salvation by knowledge, *gnosis*, and salvation by faith, *pistis*, the battle was joined. Paul was heart and soul for the latter. And let it be said once more that his theology is a direct rescript of his own experiences. It was the work of an Olympian understanding.

THE MIND OF CHRIST AND THE ETHICS
OF PAUL

I

THAT Paul had not known the human Jesus, though it was he who came to understand Him best, I have already said; that if he had not known Jesus after the flesh, he did know the risen Christ who had transformed his life, with whom he had died to sin, with whom he had risen from the dead into *new* life. The highest, most blessed state he could imagine any soul enjoying is expressed, as we have seen, in his much-used concise and marvellously pregnant phrase, “in Christ.” He was truly *pneumatikos*, he belonged to the genuine *pneumatikoi*, those who were spiritual, having full liberty, and possessing all things *in Christ*.

This wonderful little phrase “in Christ” states a mystical condition to be entered into here in this life—a sheltering, protecting security from the evil in the world. His expression “with Christ” points to a higher state, since immortality and the life to come is a higher state than this life can ever be, even though lived “in Christ.”

Paul’s ethics were rooted in his mysticism. He laid his emphasis at just one point which sets “his Gospel” apart from all others, namely, the mystical union of the believer with Christ, “Christ in you the hope of glory,” and the resulting union of Christians in Christ, “for we are one in him.”

Much has been written concerning the supposed differ-

ence between the theology of the Gospels and the Epistles, between the ideas and ideals of Jesus and those of Paul. But entering them through the channel of the ethical and studying both from the standpoint of their ethics, it is seen that the ideals of Jesus and those of Paul are quite similar, if not the same.

Since Paul was a true initiate into the Christ-mystery, his burning purpose was to present every man perfect in Christ.

But many of his converts were still babes in Christ. To their experience must be added precept and example. His own preaching embodied the precepts they needed; he got his message from Christ. "Let this mind be in you," he lovingly but urgently enjoins, "which also was in Christ Jesus."¹ He himself was their example, for he had taken his pattern from Christ. "Become imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ."—Not that Paul was setting himself up as infallible, but simply as an example. To the beloved Philippians he wrote: "The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do."² Logically they had no need of rules, since being in Christ they would naturally walk according to the new insights and help of the Spirit, but as has been said, "logic in Paul always gave way to the practical needs of morality." For with sorrow he saw that many who claimed to be in Christ failed to live worthily of the new life. "For many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ."³ They must look to Christ, measuring their conduct by His. But not only was Christ an example to be followed, but the source of the new life and the power making it possible. Men living their life in Christ will bear the fruits of the Spirit. By setting their minds on the things that are above, and not on the things that are on the earth; by seeking the

¹ Phil. 2:5.

² Phil. 4:9.

³ Phil. 3:18.

things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God.

The experience of being "in Christ" not only made for harmony within the individual Christian's soul, it made for unity between believers. Love was the principle binding the brethren together in the bond of unity. The Christians lived an exalted life. Christ dwelt in them; they actually formed His body. They must live in a manner worthy of this exalted state. In his letter addressed to the Philippian Church the apostle gives a true picture of the ideal Christian brotherhood. "Live in unity among yourselves, animated by an equal and mutual love, knit together in all your sympathies and affections, united in all your thoughts and aims. Do nothing to promote the ends of party faction, nothing to gratify your own personal vanity: but be humble-minded and esteem your neighbours more highly than yourselves. Let not every man regard his own wants, his own interests; but let him consult also the interest and wants of others."⁴

II

Religion pertains to man's inner spiritual life; ethics to his outer conduct. Religion is the expression of man's spiritual experience. Ethics is a set of rules governing his external conduct. Paul was both distinctly religious and markedly ethical. He delighted in principles, law, order, system, restraint, but that he had rare delight, also, in the exquisite moment, the fine careless rapture, we saw in the previous chapter.

There was a section of the Church at Corinth who styled themselves *pneumatikoi*, the enlightened ones. They had carried Paul's teaching concerning the freedom of Christians from the Law to wild extremes. They turned their liberty into license. For them there could be no fixed standard of moral conduct; they were "spiritual," and above the moral

⁴ Phil. 2:2-4, Lightfoot's Translation.

law. They actually seemed proud that "they could break every canon of decency and yet be without sin." For them all things were lawful. To their foolish boast Paul makes the sufficient answer: "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are expedient."⁵ For Christians more than for others, the most rigid moral conduct is essential. Liberty in Christ cannot be so construed as to allow conduct which is contrary to the mind of Christ. But the Church at Corinth was hardly the place to put into practice the ideal doctrine of pure Christian democracy, which believes in the right of small bodies to govern themselves. So for the time being—and contrary to his usual practice—the apostle becomes a dictator, laying down rules of conduct against the time when fuller light should be gained. This is ever the function and ministry of law.

Paul conceived of Christian men as a brotherhood. That means partnership. Partnership, if it be actual, saves men from dictating to inferiors or cringing before superiors. In fact, it destroys these distinctions; it makes for comradeship. Christianity throws nobody away. There were no untouchables to Jesus or Paul, no waste of human lives. All are brothers in Christ. There ought to be preference for each other in the churches. This was the ideal he held before them all. For Paul, the final authority was the light within; and since he knew himself to be indwelt by Christ, he could not conceive of a better criterion of moral conduct. He saw it the double duty of religion to keep truth alive and to keep life true. So he insisted upon rigid separation from all that would defile.

A complementary idea to that of separateness or aloofness from all in the world that would defile, is his other admonition, to be steadfast in all the conduct of life. As much as he was the apostle of liberty, he was no less the apostle of order and subordination. He spent no time agitating opposition to the government or any national or

⁵ I Cor. 6:12.

social abuse; no rebellion did he foment. This statement is amply borne out in two respects.

III

Take, first, his attitude toward the state. In spite of the fact that Paul saw the world, including the Roman government, under the dark domination of sin and demons, he seems never to have cherished any but good will toward the Roman Government. The fanatical zealots among the Jews might on patriotic grounds oppose Rome, even to their grave peril, but Paul was no fanatic. To him, the state was a divine instrument, ordained by God for the protection of all who would do right and appointed for the punishment of evil doers. Rulers, whether conscious of their rôle or not, were God's instruments for good. Like Jesus, he staunchly believed in "rendering unto Cæsar the things which were Cæsar's." His converts were made to feel it their sacred obligation to support and respect the government.

No nation at that time was so tolerant of all faiths as Rome. Paul saw in Rome an aid to the spread of Christ's Gospel. He did his best to guard the Church from any suspicion, for the benefits of the *Pax Romana* were everywhere to be seen. If certain of the emperors later persecuted Christians, it was because they departed from the ideals and set policy of the empire. It is true that Nero, with whom justice was nothing, killed Paul, yet it was from the Jews, not from the Romans, that he and the Christians met their greatest opposition.

Since Paul had taught that Christians were the children of God and free from the law, there was danger of them carrying out his teaching to its logical conclusion and refusing to obey any earthly king or submit to any man-made law. "They were the children of the kingdom of God; why should they recognize any other king? They were free from the law; why should they obey any law? Paul realized the danger," says M. S. Enslin, from whom I quote,

“that was menacing. Since the Christian groups were not large, they would probably not cause a national commotion, yet should they rebel they would give Christianity its death-blow.”⁶

While there is not the slightest evidence that Paul ever had any quarrel with Rome, by upholding the government he was not “stifling conviction for the sake of policy.” He was not the man to go with the times; he would be the last man in the world to think of trimming to the storm; he would not swerve from what he believed a right course for him. He would not be guilty of saying with Cicero, “it is folly to preserve in struggling against the wind,” meaning by that that it is imprudent ever to move against the popular opinion of the many, even if that opinion be wrong. Paul wanted to always be on the right side of a question, but he did not care a straw whether he was on the safe side, unless the safe side were the right side. It is safe to say that if he had seen Rome as altogether vile and hopeless that he would have denounced her. Proud of his Roman citizenship, he preached obedience to the state, yet he and the generality of first generation Christians practiced extreme detachment from the affairs of the world. They were in the empire, but not of it; their real citizenship was in heaven.

Paul was positive before he was negative, constructive more than destructive. The creator in him outran the critic always. He did not conceive his rôle as censor of surface manners and morals, though—as seen above—he cannot be said to have been entirely free from the mistake of laying down rules of minor usefulness and of short duration. A case in point is his regulations of woman’s activities in certain of his churches. He was far less a social vivisectionist than an individual regenerator. He was strong for principle, but he never sacrificed people to principle. He was an accredited doctor of humanity—the comrade of all classes

⁶ *The Ethics of Paul*, p. 206. Harper and Brothers. Used by permission.

and conditions of men, with a wholesome prejudice in favour of the under classes.

IV

Another feature of the ethics of Paul which some have found not easy to reconcile with the mind of Christ, is his attitude to slavery in the Roman Empire. Much has been written of late years about this.

Paul did not oppose slavery, at least not openly. He had no faith in the power of legislation to give freedom. He believed there was a far more effectual way to undo the curse of slavery—the union of believers in Christ which he preached, could it be put into practice on any large scale, could hardly fail to work the ancient evil's downfall. It would lift the slave into the realm of the self-respecting and cause the master to recognize him on the plane of equality with himself. This would be the death of all harsh treatment of the slave by the master, which in turn would be the beginnings of the death of slavery itself. This is the method used and the message preached in his letter to Philemon regarding his runaway slave Onesimus. Moreover, slave or free—what was the difference? He who is free in his spirit and pure in his mind is no slave, though he be in bondage as to his body to another. Anyway, the soon coming of the Lord, as Paul believed, would quickly remedy that. It was too much to hope for full justice in this life.

At all events, in this the apostle was sane and practical. Well did he know that should the slaves refuse to serve their pagan masters, that they would be compelled to do so. In all probability they would be executed; it would not only cause needless bloodshed, it would bring the Church into disrepute. Both slave and master were to remain steadfast in the right—the slave being obedient to his master, and the master rendering justice and fairness to his slave—not forgetting that the day was at hand when God, not man, would recompense justice to both, and on the basis of “the deeds done in the body.”

Rome's numerous wars increased enormously the number of slaves, and as the number of slaves increased in the Empire, luxury and extravagance increased in society. Slavery also brought labour into disrepute with the well-to-do. It made for idleness, and idleness bred corruption. But it must not be supposed that this dark picture was unrelieved. There were bright spots and high lights in the dark system.

As said above, Paul did not attack slavery for several reasons, one being his expectation of the Parousia and the end of the world. Besides, in his eyes, a slave could be as good a Christian as a freeman.

Yet—Christianity was the slave system's undoing. It recognized no class-distinctions. The letter to Philemon, while restoring a runaway slave to his master, had within it the seeds of slavery's downfall. In such words as, "No longer as a bond-servant, but . . . a brother beloved," lay the germ which, working quietly but effectively, would one day spell the doom of the unholy practice. In the Christian society slave and master sat on the same footing at the table of the Lord. It was not possible for such a system to fare well when such leaven was at work in society.

It could make little difference if government was sometimes shortsighted and unjust. What *real* difference could it make if the slave was sometimes mistreated? If he served faithfully, would he not receive his reward? The glory of the future would so far outweigh the sufferings of the present as to make the latter of little consequence.

This is not to say that Paul would side-step an entrenched evil, or that he had no interest in social reform; he did. Only he chose methods foreign to most we employ to that end; for, though he expected the world to end on the morrow, he lived and taught as if it were to last forever. And well did he know that whatever the future might be, if it was to be better than the present, it must rest upon righteousness.

Inwardly Christians were to sedulously cultivate Christian graces, and to promote Christian growth. But outwardly they were to remain *in status quo*.

It is in the light of this principle that we are to understand Paul's apparent advocacy of and the preference for celibacy to the married state. His words have been interpreted as a justification of celibacy—an example, in the opinion of many, of how his teaching has been used to augment an evil which he sought to prevent. His was a life of sacrificial, soulful chastity. And if he may be understood to prescribe celibacy, his prescription is too austere and impractical for men as they are. But even a great apostle must not be expected to be strictly fool-proof in making regulations which are supposed to apply to all ages.

Keep in mind that Paul's first love for Christ was romantic love, rosy with a prospect for tomorrow. Christ was coming—coming to change all things, to transform the world. The present system was ready to vanish away; it did not represent Christ. So he wrote to the Thessalonians in the earliest of his writings that Christ coming was imminent.

Remember that Paul had never seen the human Jesus; that his first vision was the vision of Jesus glorified. The Man of Galilee he never saw. It was the heavenly Christ “panoplied in heavenly splendour,” that he knew. It was the Messiah whom he had seen on the Damascus road—the Christ of majesty and power, clothed in light and the conqueror's robe. Since this was the first Christian image to get planted in Paul's soul, it is not strange if it is the first Christian image in his writings. Hence Jesus and the Resurrection are prominent features of his early preaching. Hope was the major note. Naturally he looked not backward or around him, but forward. Tomorrow held the promise of all his hopes and desires.

It is this which explains his indifference, so prominent in his earliest epistles, toward “this present world.” He does not condemn marriage; he is indifferent to it. He does not disdain commerce; he is indifferent to it. He does not uphold slavery; he is indifferent to it. He says it is of no consequence to religion whether one is married or single,

whether one gets or loses, whether one is slave or free. Christ is all in all. To possess Christ is to have all.

Daily the Parousia was expected. Why should slaves crave their freedom? Why be impatient with a government which shall soon be brought to nought? Why should Christians marry? Their generation will surely end in the coming Kingdom. If Christians were married, they were not to seek divorce; if unmarried, they were to remain so. In fact, as Dr. Cave has pointed out, Paul made no attempt to lay down regulations for future generations. He spoke to his own generation as if it were the last. Therefore much of the ethic, especially of his early ministry, is an "ethic of the interim."

But to the student of Paul it is clear that he revised, somewhat, his belief in the early advent of his Lord. At first he expected to be alive when He came, for He would come "soon." But later he realized that His coming would be "not yet." And as the time grew longer than he hoped, when the promise seemed slow of foot, his vision did not dim nor his efforts lag. He made wise adjustment, and even when the cause of God seemed not to prosper, was unperturbed; he never got flustered, fussy, or on edge, never tossed his dreams impatiently away; but did his duty with a firm, unflurried mind, leaving times and seasons to God's choosing. He came to the end not much concerned as to whether Christ should come while he lived or afterward, but believing His appearing to be "at hand."

V

We may well sum up the ethical teaching of Paul with Matthew Arnold's definition of religion as "lighted up morality." But religion is more than this, it is more than "ethics tinged with emotion." For Paul, however, morality and religion were inseparable. Both were of God and meant life for man. His was a God-centred system. The goal in life was final acquittal before the great assize of God. Toward all other gods he was completely an intolerant and uncompromising Jewish monotheist. Not only was he a

Hebrew of the Hebrews; he was a theist of the theists. He started from the *terra firma* of observed data made rational by the force of reason and powerful by the answer of faith. He would have been the same, one feels, had he lived in our day of limping Humanism.

It cannot be too emphatically said that with Paul religion and ethics were one. Says C. Harold Dodd of him, "He saw mankind enslaved, and lived for its emancipation; he saw it alienated, and lived for its reconciliation. Those are the two great words of the Pauline Gospel, 'redemption,' 'atonement.'" ⁷ Along with others, thousands of Jews taken prisoners in the wars of Rome, had been sold into slavery in various parts of the Empire. Benevolent Jews of wealth would often "redeem" them into liberty. Speaking to the times in which he lived, Paul taught that it was thus that Christ had redeemed men from the slavery of sin. Before these Jews could release their kinsmen from slavery they had to possess two things—the ability and the disposition to redeem them. Paul preached that Christ was both able and willing to free men from sin. Redemption in the Oriental Mysteries was but a drama; Paul converted it into an experience. Insofar as Paul adapted the Mysteries he put a moral content into them which they did not have.

Since the Protestant Reformation it has been said that Paul's great contribution to Christian doctrine was Justification by faith. And in a way it was. But faith was not a creed about Christ; *it was a life in Christ*—a life which the Christian had in fellowship with Christ, and a close social tie linking saint to saint.

With Paul, Love was not only the queen of virtues, it was the summation of them all.

*"Love why do we one passion call
When 'tis a compound of them all?"*

Just as formerly Law had been the link that bound men to duty and to God, so now it was Love which linked man with

⁷ *The Meaning of Paul for Today*, p. 54.

duty, God, and fellowmen. Of the fruits of the Spirit, Love was chief: "above all things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness." Christians are a brotherhood of which Christ is the Lord, a body of which He is the head, the bride of which He is the husband, the building in which He is the corner stone.

In his teaching that Christians must separate themselves from every defiling thing, we see the Jew in Paul. To Judaism one of the cardinal sins was the recognition of heathenism. This, carried to its logical extreme, meant despising them and leaving them untouched outside the covenant. Even proselytes to Judaism, as we saw in a former chapter,⁸ had more or less to sink their nationality and become Hebrews. But Christianity offered all that Judaism could offer, with an added attraction—liberty—which Judaism could not give. So binding was the Law on Jewish Christians that even Peter "trimmed" when it came to eating with Gentiles. At this point Paul was in complete revolt from Judaism; nevertheless, for Christians separation from pagan vices was imperative.

The sharp line of cleavage which formerly separated Jews from pagans was now to separate Christians from the shameless sins of their fellow pagans. As already seen, the worst of Eastern and Western civilization had concentrated in Corinth. Here the fight against sexual impurity and attendant vices was the most bitter that the apostle was called upon to make. He was filled with horror and anger at the boldness with which certain disgusting evils flourished within the company of believers. Amazed at the loose living of certain disorderly and filthy Christians, after reminding them that their bodies are the shrines of the Holy Spirit, he fairly roars at them: "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."⁹

So, finally, growing out of Paul's keen sense of ethical

⁸ See Chap. iii.

⁹ I Cor. 3:17.

values was his attitude toward the body. What, we may ask, was his ethics of the flesh, his attitude toward the body, his own body? What does he mean when speaking of his body he says, "I keep it under, I buffet it"? We have already seen how sharp is the antithesis he makes between *sarks* and *pneuma*, the flesh and the spirit; how keenly he feels the tug and pull of both the angelic and the serpentine in his soul. He saw the sense life and the spirit life strongly opposed.

But to come back to our question, Why does he repress and keep his body under? Does he hold that matter, and therefore the body, is evil? If so, then the very act of propagating life would be sinful. Might this have been an added reason for enjoining celibacy and virginity? When he denounces "the world" as a foe to man's progress, is it that he holds the dualistic theory of the essential evil of matter which the ascetics have always held? In other words, is Paul, who was a mystic, an ascetic also? Does he hold that the body is a loathsome thing to be mortified by various tortures that the spirit might be purified?

True, Paul talks ecstatically about being "crucified with Christ," but he is not the man to crucify his body; he never thinks of self-torture, he will do no violence to the self. Paul is neither ascetic nor Stoic. He is on the sane middle-ground between them. He cherishes no hatred of life. He does not reckon matter as intrinsically unfriendly to spirit, like the Greeks who thought of the body as the prison house in which the soul was a doomed captive. Nor did he, like them, regard the embodied life as necessarily at a disadvantage in comparison with the disembodied. In fact, he thought of the latter as being "far better." A Greek philosopher, Plotinus, felt ashamed of his body; while Epictetus is credited with the words addressed to his soul, "thou art a poor soul burdened with a corpse." Though of his body Paul did inquire, "Who will deliver me from this body of death?" it is the opposition between *sarks* and *pneuma* of a purely spiritual nature that he feels.

The apostle saw the body at the worst as only a temporary deterrent of the soul. His somewhat bitter phrase, "the body of our humiliation," uttered when the vices of the Corinthians had freshly alarmed him, gives way to his exaltation of the body as "the temple of the Holy Ghost." St. Paul never descended to speak with either the indignity or the humour of St. Francis of Assisi, who habitually spoke of his body as "Brother Ass."

Christianity made self-sacrifice the road to self-realization. The Stoic practices stern self-repression to attain self-mastery. In the matter of personal choice and the exercise of the will Paul was a Stoic. He buffeted his body, that is, kept it in subjection to the spirit, that reason and grace, and not low passions might control. In this Paul was Puritan of the Puritans.

In the Epicurean philosophy nothing was of value, not even the human body, unless it could be made a means to pleasure. Paul stood at the opposite pole from this. But by buffeting his body, he does not seek to stifle pleasure or kill desire; these are raised, sublimated, fused with the total purpose of his life. Pain and toil, the agony of cold and hunger; the beatings, imprisonments, the loneliness of days and nights, are but incidents on the upward road he travels, a part of the cost of his quest. He sees in suffering an aid to spiritual mastery, but he does not induce it; he accepts it as a useful discipline in the conquest of life and the attainment of his shining goal.

There can be little doubt but the seeds of what is generally termed "Calvinism" are in Paul's teaching. Calvinism as sponsored by one John Calvin is determinism, but determinism with God as the Determiner. Calvinism in theology is greatly frowned upon nowadays. But we have a new sort of Calvinism which is much worse than the old; it is Behaviourism. And what is Behaviourism but determinism *with God left out of the picture?* But in Paul there was far more of the innate mystic than of the ornate theologian.

Elsewhere I have pointed out that Paul was a one-thing

man. No one can plan a spiritual empire along far-reaching lines, and go as far as Paul did toward its realization, or perform an immortal work of any kind without "cutting away and killing off a large number of live and appealing human interests." It is on this ground, we saw, that he may be excused for his lack of interest in nature, Greek philosophy and art. But the apostle sacrificed these "human interests" to his one all-impelling interest—Christ and the Church. In these he had found an aim worthy of any sacrifice he might make, and he made it gladly, not doubting that his loss in one sphere would be more than made up for in another. His sphere was religion; in this he was a genius.

Having once chosen this as his career, he would let nothing hinder it. He sternly eliminated all unnecessary baggage. In him there was no hatred of life, but in pursuing his new spiritual goal he deemed it not too much to pluck out an eye which hindered or to cut off a right arm if it hampered his onward course. He set himself to attain what Christ called "a single eye." Such an attitude forced him to say to all secondary matters and some good things—

"Stand thou on that side, for on this am I."

Christ's way of life, no matter to what sufferings or sacrifices it should lead, was his chosen way, and *he would go that way.*

*"Life has no other logic
And time no other creed
Than: I for joy will follow
Where thou for love dost lead."*

VI

By now it is evident, that while Paul vaunted no roseate optimism concerning the times, yet he was profoundly certain of truth's triumph among men. Perhaps he would not like our too comfortable religion; for, as Dr. Fosdick has said, "Modern Christianity has grown soft, sentimental,

saccharine. It has taken on pink flesh and lost strong bone. It has become too much flute and too little trumpet. It has fallen from the stimulating altitudes of austerity and rigour, where high religion customarily has walked.”¹⁰

To Paul, religion was a thing of heroisms; God was to be served with all the might of a wholly devoted life. With many today God seems a nurse-maid for any pet notions held or any ego-centric interests cherished. For Paul, the whole of life was other-centred, not self-centred. It was based on self-renunciation, therefore, like all high living, was powerfully redemptive. Paul was an athlete, but he was still more a soldier; life to him was not only a race to be run, it was a battle to be fought. His religion was not a bed to sleep on, or a chair to sit on, but a banner to follow. His heroic type of religion may be too uncommon today, but it is not outmoded.

The mind of Christ was the guiding star of the ethics of Paul. His new-found faith was a hot compulsion to his duty. Christ is death to easy standards, low ideals, and small smug living.—He was to Paul, He will be to us. Oh that the infection of this heart, by Christ made gallant and good, may blow across the centuries and make us bigger than we in ourselves can be!

At the risk of repetition, let it be said that in nothing was Paul more Christlike than in his sympathy for the common man. He seemed to think that if the Christian religion was to endure it must be housed in the hearts of the lowly. Not from the top could his enormous dream be realized. He saw that the winds of time had a way of blowing away kings and temples, philosophers and powers. But if the people could be won the Christian cause was safe. So he gave more attention to the slaves of Cæsar’s household than to Cæsar himself.

But thinkers who are the products, supposedly, of Christianity, have fallen short of Paul in this. There is, for

¹⁰ *Harper’s Magazine*, June, 1930.

example, little sympathy in Shakespeare's plays for the common people. Like the pagan Greek tragedies, his characters are all of the governing and upper class. Paul is the very antithesis of all this. The apostle did not deprecate the judicious few, but his heart went out to the undiscriminating many. His genius comprehended the past, summed up the present, and initiated a future more glorious than either.

We have seen that Paul did not belong to that type of mystic lotus-eaters, who

*“Leaving human wrongs to right themselves
Have cared but to pass into the silent life.”*

He was not self-centred or indrawn. He never slid into a mischievous passivity or quietism. He did not hold that when God and the soul had been reconciled that religion had reached its terminus. He panted for social reconstruction as well. He did feel personally invaded, awakened, fused, flooded, and on occasion, rapt, caught away, but never really removed from the world's tragic problems.

He preferred to trust to “those tiny invisible molecular moral forces that work from individual to individual,” in the words of William James, “creeping in through the crannies of the world like so many soft rootlets or like the capillary oozing of water.” He was not so much the panoplied knight attacking the world's wrongs from the social side, though sometimes he girds himself with the whole armour of God and fights manfully in the moral contests of the world.

Paul was a man equally keyed for action and meditation, but when to these was added a deep mystical experience, he was fashioned into one of the most intensely dynamic persons the world has ever seen.

XII

THE MAN AS REVEALED BY HIS WORDS

I

AS said before, the one way we have of knowing Paul is through his words. He did not get written into the secular history of his time; very little literature built about him survives; the Book of Acts gives us but an incomplete account of his outward history and says nothing of his inward life; no photograph, statue, or written biographical matter has come down to us. We have many pictures and busts of the Cæsars of Paul's day, but neither bust nor picture of the apostle has found the light so far. Nor did the "obscure travelling preacher," as Deissmann calls him, get into the official records of the day; and it may have been, as he suggests, that the official world took little notice of him. What is more, who would have dreamed that future generations would be much interested in the life or outward features of the tent-weaver from Tarsus? Thus only can we explain the odd fact that not a single contemporary historian makes any mention of him.

Christianity, originally, was not a book religion. None of the early founders of the faith wrote in order to preserve their teaching for posterity. Neither Jesus nor Paul wrote for future ages. Jesus wrote nothing to be preserved. Paul wrote certain non-literary letters to private individuals and Christian groups when occasion demanded that he either be present in person or write; he was often in prison and could not go, so he wrote; but he never thought of writing for a reading public then, much less for future generations.

Tradition has painted Paul as a near-sighted, bandy-legged, hook-nosed, palsied little man with raven black eyes

which saw deeply into the minds of men. In addition to being undersized, beaky-nosed, and weak-eyed—which things no doubt were so—he is said to have been pale of face, dark of hair, and ugly with a leering squint, though very sedate looking.—All of which may or may not be true.

At any rate, Paul's masculinity is evident. None but a masculine Jesus could have attracted and held this masculine man. It was the robust sturdiness in the personality and message of Jesus that claimed Paul and gave fruitage to the sturdy and robust heroism incident to his missionary life. Deep here answers deep. But it has been the fashion of late for certain writers to picture Paul as an unimpressive man. This is as much underdone as the impression of the great Christian artists, who have painted him imposing as the "Moses" of Michael Angelo, was overdone. As to his figure, we may never know the truth, but that he was a person of marked individuality and power we know. His words prove it. So, whether he was the tall, alert, imposing figure of the ancients, or the unimpressive and squatly man of the moderns, matters nothing; that he was of gigantic stature mentally and spiritually is what counts.

That he was all of this, his writings fully demonstrate. Words naïvely reveal the soul of the man who utters them. If Paul's letters do not sketch for us the outward history of the man—and we have seen that apart from a few vague hints they do not—they do set forth clearly his interior life. His portrait drawn by his own hand and projected through his letters is as distinct as if flung on canvas. Effortlessly and in a copious stream his letters pour forth from his central being.

II

Paul is suggestive often beyond what he says in so many words. He chooses language stark and full of pictures which merely image the truth he does not pause to unfold. His words have great germinal quality. Taken a sentence of his into the mind, turned over, it explodes and gives birth

to many shades of truth and kinds of ideas. While he is more prolific of ideas than of language, he possesses a word-creativity, a verbal audacity which appears even in translations of the arresting Greek he uses. His speech is limpid and leaping; it has often a rush as of water leaping over a cascade, pouring itself in turgid, irresistible torrents. It is prevailingly the language of ecstasy—broken sentences, ellipses, exclamations, questions, sharp antitheses, thrilling climaxes, allegories, and leaping argumentations. His language is often outreached by his thoughts. There is little fixity of detail or form. No logical writer was he, in our Western sense; not that he was illogical, but alogical, indifferent as to the arrangement of his material. He was a great thinker, but not primarily a thinker; he cannot be said to have had a probing mind except for things of the spirit. Superior rationality was not a quality of his; he scarcely scratched the universe with his mind, but in the realm of the soul he was the searcher of dark continents. The first chapters of Romans come closer to being speculative thought than anything he wrote, perhaps, and show most traces of doctrinal dissertation. He was no gentleman scholar standing off and viewing with critical, dispassionate eyes the strange and often tragic doings of men. He flung himself in the midst of them. He lived dramatically, but not with gusto and to the full, was no earth man. His ideas underwent change through the years, there was a development, but his mind seldom had a change of weather. Yet—he was the discoverer who was always sniffing the wind.

Most of Paul's language would hardly be classed as picturesque, but if he does not fill his phrases with pregnant beauty, he does plant more meaning in them than any person since Jesus or before Shakespeare. If his words are not always musical, they must be conceded a wealth of meaning unusual in the literature of the world. He never toys with words simply to be toying with them. His is not the stylistic ambition of the rhetorician, yet rhetoric was his ready steed, which sometimes he drove swiftly. "O the depth of the

riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out,"¹ might serve as an instance.

There is something in his words, whatever it may be, a grace, a beauty, a power, that spurs us to think more deeply, to imagine farther, and to live the best that is in us. He is the seer who takes us by the hand and leads us to the heights where we glimpse more of life's meaning and magic. He deepens our existence here and begets a brighter vision of eternity.

Of certain parts of Paul's writings some are wont to say, "Here speaks the theologian, here the Jew, here the dogmatist, or the Christian mystic." However that may be, it is completely certain—that in all his writings, from beginning to end, there speaks the *man*. St. Peter, speaking of Paul's writings, declared that "the beloved brother" had written "some things hard to be understood." Did Peter have in mind some parts of Romans or Ephesians? It is true that the creed-makers of history have dipped their pens deep in Paul, yet the apostle believed in salvation by character more than by creed. In him there was little of the dogmatizer; nothing of the creed-maker; he was no pontiff of ecclesiastical forms and fashions; he had tremendous respect for conventions, but little use for tedious and pettifogging ritual, was Protestant rather than Catholic in the expression of his faith. In him there were oceans of humanity, rare depths of spirituality, unusual catholicity; he was preacher, missionary, apostle, but brother first of all.

III

As I have been saying all along, the letters of Paul, none of them long, dip deeply into the personality of the man. They are the spiritual unburdenings, the luminous introspections of a great heart—history full of moving self-

¹ Rom. 11:33.

confessions. They are the most intensely alive of all ancient documents which have come down to us, and they give us not so much a scheme of Christian doctrine as the colourful portrait of a living man.

Some of the sappiest paragraphs ever penned by man are to be found in Paul's writings. He speaks the truth in candour and makes character supreme. His words have about them a deathless witchery. Nothing in the poetry of the world surpasses Paul in his greatest moments, nothing in the literature of common sense is superior or more practical than much of his admonition. His writings are studded with gems of splendid sanity. His ideas, like those of Jesus, were prophetic of a new era—replete with electric flashes, fresh and surprising, veritable cannonades. One is impressed by Paul's volcanic energy. He is a sort of human earthquake which throws out verbal lava to the serious damage of sham and sordidness. Said Erasmus, "Paul thunders and lightens and speaks sheer flame." He was no smooth composer of editorials; he was a reporter of stirring events. Christ was a news event of front page importance. The Gospel of Christ was *news*—the *good news*. The Gospel must ever come as news if it is to come with telling power. Mere editorial Christianity will hardly save the world. Paul was a man with a remedy for a sick age. Any remedy to bring healing to such an age must be a stout affair. The Gospel which converted Paul, which leaped from the lips of the dying Stephen, was a stout affair. Paul was borne about by great emotions without which he would have been negligible like any one else, and his Gospel ineffective as were others then current. A great style and a strong message are the echoes of a great soul.

Sometimes Paul was the pure poet, with the strongest currents sweeping through his soul. In such moments he becomes strangely lucent. On rare occasions he writes in rich bucolic strain; for, hopeful as he was, yet there was in him, as in all great natures, a sable strand of melancholy. Like all deeply religious spirits, he had at times a poignant

consciousness of the frailty and evanescence of earthly things.

Like all creative minds, Paul coined new words to carry his thoughts, especially is this true in his moments of great creativeness, when he succeeds in expressing himself in monumental language of great conciseness and power. His letter to the Galatians is nothing so much as one long series of explosions, every one of which is a telling hammer-blow driving his arguments home. Of Galatians Ramsey says, "It is a unique and marvellous letter, which embraces in its six short chapters such a variety of vehement and intense emotion as could probably not be paralleled in any other work."² And, says Farrar, "What Luther did at Wittenberg, and at Worms, and at Wartburg, that, and more than that, Paul did when he wrote the Epistle to the Galatians. . . . The words scrawled on those few sheets of papyrus were destined to wake echoes which have lived and shall live forever and forever. Savonarola heard them, and Wicliff, and Huss, and Luther, and Tyndale, and Wesley. They were the Magna Charta of spiritual emancipation."³

In Galatians Paul feels intensely both kindness and calumny. Obstinate opposition of the Judaizers in Galatia infuriates him, and he says in cutting curtness what he thinks: "I wish," says he, "that those who unsettled you on the subject of circumcision would go off and castrate themselves."⁴ No sooner than Paul won freedom for the Gentile Christians from the Church at Jerusalem, than the Judaizers organized their opposition; wherever he went its agents followed him. As this almost heart-broken letter to the Galatians shows, they sent missionaries to the churches in his absence, who upset the work of the first missionary journey. This was true from Antioch on, when he had demanded complete exemption from the Law which once he so

² *Historical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, Chap. 46.

³ *Messages of the Books*, p. 238.

⁴ Gal. 5:11.

cruelly defended. When Paul tries to express what the Judaizers have done in Galatia his feelings are so overcome that his grammar goes to pieces.

On the other hand, kindness moved the apostle to tears of gratefulness. He had true friends in Galatia, to them he wrote in all the starkness of concreteness: "Ye did not spit out at me."⁵ If some of his words scorch and burn and wither like lava withers the green grass or the tender leaves, others are soothing and healing, like a magic ointment.

Paul's courtesy flowers in his delightful little letter to Philemon. Here he writes with rare delicacy and decorum. Elegance is something Paul never strives for and seldom achieves, but he achieves it here. Said Erasmus, "Cicero never wrote with greater elegance." There is about Philemon an Attic refinement and so great a psychological tact, and adroitness and gracefulness that make it a masterpiece of ancient letter writing. It combines beauty and brevity. It is the New Testament's Book of Ruth, its "idyll of domestic life."

This vivid, devout, unqualified manner of writing makes Paul's words, like feathered arrows, go straight to the point. They have largely escaped the gravitation of time. Just as the English Bible made English monumental, and just as Dante made Italian by epitomizing it in his fervent poems, so Paul's writings will ever stand as the finest models of Christian thought ever penned. So much that he wrote is the warm, intimate, seminal language of the heart. He was lord of religious language. Many a Christian truth stands unforgettable by means of a golden phrase. For example: "The wages of sin is death;" "the gift of God is life through Jesus Christ;" "justified by faith, we have peace with God;" "your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit;" "the peace of God which passeth knowledge;" "Death, where is thy sting; grave, where is thy victory?" There is

⁵ Gal. 4:14.

abiding vitality in his teaching, couched as it is in language of great verve and marching power.

And yet—this vigorous, sinewy, epigrammatic type of teaching is couched in the thought-forms of the first century addressed to men of that day. If to us his speech is sometimes obscure, not in every particular convincing, it is never weak, never goes limping. If to us his style is occasionally clumsy, involved, and a bit twisted; if in places it lacks in grace and finish, it makes up for it in the high average of vigour it maintains; for the rush of his words is not unlike the wild rush of waters at flood stage.

Still—one comes surprisingly often on a sentence or phrase that shines with the authentic fire of genius. “The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life;” “Jews ask for signs, Greeks seek after wisdom,” are but samples of glowing sentences packed with wisdom, by which a king of speech reveals his royal blood. Paul is never loquacious, is not given to high-sounding words or artificial ornamentation, because he speaks earnestly upon a topic of eternal importance. Great writing is always informed with the charm of sincerity and the music of emotion. Quicken the intellect, and it will express thought in sentences that are clear, but unmusical. Touch the heart and into utterance steals pathos and penetrating melody. Paul wrote literature because he put so much of the heart element into his work. He had his prosaic moments when his language was common enough, but under strong emotion “familiar words clothed themselves with unfamiliar beauty.”

Paul was no mere trafficker in words; he simply laid them under tribute to carry his spirit out. His words are a channel from his soul through his outer and surface actions; a collection of rich, racy unbosomings of his glowing heart, superb in dash and vigour. In Paul there is always more heart than art. Some of his shafts are sharp, even piercing, and he made many enemies; he was a hard hitter, but he does not strike unfairly. He sweeps his opponents off their feet and writes himself down as a

master of prose, the fervid vigour of which is not lost in translation.

IV

It has been said that literature is life “ distilled in the alembic of genius that its essential oils may be preserved to succeeding generations.” If literature is that which depicts life, then Christian literature is that which depicts Christian life, or life as it should be; and the writings called Pauline are a divine sort of literature, for they minister superbly to the hidden divinity in man’s nature. In them he takes account of dark problems, but these are not despair writings of a gloom-spreader; they are full of reason and faith grown valorous in the future of man.

Perhaps no little of the spiritual glow of Paul’s writings is due to the fact that he was sprung from a prophet-breeding race whose unconquerable soul was sustained by the sure conviction of a divine mission. The blood of seers and theocratic kings coursed along his veins, warming his spirit. His sentences exhale a perfume of antiquity, frequently harking back to sages and seers of former times. His thought strains away from the present into the past and future in search of truth. But whilst his thought is mulched with tradition, rooted in old centuries of Hebrew lore, yet he is pre-eminently the apostle of today and tomorrow. He sucked the marrow of the ancient world; he got his ethics from the Jews, his mysticism from the Greeks, and his sense of race solidarity from the Romans. That he venerated the prophets we know, but he never took on any white-bearded Old Testament air.

As said above, not all Paul’s teaching is sun-clear; some of his chapters, such as Romans 9–11, are vague, though full of twilight, haunting mystery. Nor do all his paragraphs possess equal ethical value. There are strong spots and weak spots, mountain peaks and valleys; they are not one uniformly fertile plain. There are desert stretches in which little grows that is of worth to modern men. His

Rabbinical arguments in Galatians make no such appeal to us of today as do his teachings on justification by faith, on Christian liberty, or the Cross in the same epistle. Who takes seriously his teaching on marriage or celibacy? Who now feels bound by his regulation of women's dress or conduct in the Church?

And yet—the amount of his teaching which is inapplicable to our day is surprisingly small; to accept his teaching *en bloc* would be quite as absurd as to reject it *en bloc*—a thing which modern folk will not do. It is a little dangerous to turn the fluid metaphors of either Jesus or Paul into precise laws; neither were law-givers, but conscience-makers. In Romans, Paul describes with mordant power sin's terrible reign over the race, and his portrayal of the sorry state of pagan life *per se* is as frightful as it is strong. Here he depicts with stark reality the dark recesses of the human heart; as in the seventh chapter of this same epistle, he gives the subtlest analysis of spiritual moods and states. But if he paints the "natural man" black, it is to show what he may be in terms of what he is. After all, men were not so much demons as angels in the dirt.

Often, as said before, Paul's thoughts range beyond the star-blossoming night and dwell in the light of eternal day. He can lay claim to ecstatic experiences which belong to highly-tuned states; and always he gives the impression that he has not only sought but found. In certain of his expressions treating on immortality there is a stillness, a restfulness, a dreamy grace that is bewitching.⁶ Sometimes his dreams lead him into a path of retreat that ends in a cloud-land of symbolism. It was the world's cold rebuffs that occasionally sent his spirit skylarking to out-soar the temporal and the real.

Sometimes his language is as an eagle's flight, bold and forth on, leaving no trace behind. Words tumble from his heated brain in tumultuous succession. His strong periods

⁶ See I Cor. 15:54 and II Cor. 5:1.

tread upon each other, now and then outrunning the power of the pen to vehicle them. There is jauntiness in his words, but none in his thought. He never sacrifices truth to epigram, though much that he says is half way to poetry. Unity and coherence he does not always achieve, for Paul is natural, never artificial. . . . There is much abruptness; unexpected, forked sentences and some never completed. His letter to the Galatians is a book hard to put down; it pulls you along with the turbulent rush of its vitality. His thoughts rush on each other, and sometimes "ride each other down." But nothing in Paul is forced, all is unconscious, unhampered, free.

The apostle's word-range is not extensive, he had not the vocabulary of a Shakespeare. Of the four thousand seven hundred words in the New Testament, Paul uses only six hundred; still, he often taxes the power of language to express his thought. His is the unpolished style of the frontiersman. His writings contain the "original oar" of a great pioneer Christian. He uses the language of a religion that is young and culturally somewhat raw.

It should be remembered that the majority of his letters were "creations of the fugitive moment;" that, as Ewald says, "they were born of anxiety and bitterness of human strife." Alongside his chivalrous courtesy are expressions of irony and scorching sarcasm. There is often a grand confusion of metaphor, of which Colossians 2:6-7 is a good example. Here he exhorts men to walk, be rooted like a tree, and be built up like a house, all in one figure. But this confusion of language is due to the profusion of his ideas, which struggle for a place on the written page. His expression, "I am less than the least of all saints,"⁷ is an absurd one as to its grammar—a comparative formed on a superlative—but its quality is rich and its meaning sun-clear. But the nature of the style is explained by the character of the man. *The man is the style.*

⁷ Eph. 3:8.

Sometimes Paul is given to puns; he plays on words. To certain lazy men at Thessalonica he writes of being "not busy, but busybodies." He accuses certain gossiping women at Ephesus of being "busy in the school of idleness."

But what Paul intended as tracts for the time became tracts for all time; for in these rich retrospections of his soul, the apostle to the Gentiles has built for himself a monument more durable than bronze or brass; by them he has proven the power of thought to be greater than the power of the sword. Had his writings perished, with most that was written in his day, earth had been less fair and men less manly.

In an age when contemporary literature, both Greek and Jewish, was turgid with the lucubrations of philosophers and fancies of fanatics, this awakened Jew produced a literature almost wholly free from either. He made no dry and jejune contribution to this store of misapprehension. These letters are the most accurate mirror of humanity's spiritual longings to be found in the literature of the spirit.

V

Everywhere the apostle displays the fullest aversion to hypocrisy. He exposes with glee the weakness or malice of his opponents. With surest irony does he twitch off the masks of the insincere detractors of his enterprise. He is an unanswerable debater. Once in a while he assumes a forensic manner, as when he anathematizes certain perverters of the Gospel of Christ: "Though we or an angel from heaven should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we have preached unto you, let him be anathema."⁸ Not a few of his words glow and bite; many of them owe their being to a controversial impulse. But Paul was no Savonarola with scorpion's tongue; it was not his nature to sting. He was both courtesy and candour in one. Only in extreme cases did he wield the rapier of ridicule.

⁸ Gal. 1:8.

His epistles to the churches in the Lycus Valley—Colossians and Ephesians, the last of which was a circulating letter meant for several churches—are conceded to be among the finest products of his pen. This region was like Galatia, mountainous and volcanic, and like their environment, the people were volcanic and emotional. But what a difference in the tone of Galatians and these two epistles! Galatians, as we have seen, is turbulent, written in a great crisis when Paul was under fire. But Colossians and Ephesians were penned from prison in Rome; they are calm, studied, peaceful like a river. In them, too, there is discussion and controversy, but in what a different spirit! In Galatians Paul is the fighter, while in Colossians he is the disciplined soldier, and in Ephesians the builder. Colossians is polemical; Ephesians is poetical. Ephesians has been aptly called “the third heaven epistle,” “the Alps of the New Testament.” Paul is in a prison cell, but he sits on a heavenly throne with Christ. All the prison epistles are the products of a sage rather than a soldier. The earlier epistles were struck off at white heat; they are full of fire and energy and knock-out blows; they evidence a fair fighting spirit. But the epistles of the captivity breathe a gentler air; they are characterized by strength, appositeness of allusion and the sense of the inevitable word and the correct phrase to carry the fullest measure of truth and conviction.

Few men ever knocked so terribly at the soul's door as Paul. His Gospel comes in appealing cadences which vibrate with both pity and terror. His is the mood and message of his Lord. At times he brings strange sensations from over the borders of the world which he finds it impossible to set into sense-breathing words. Unlike Jesus, who was a master of words, his ideas do not always find free and untrammelled outlet. To the brilliant, graphic imagery of the Apocalypse he never quite attains, even in First Thessalonians where he is apocalyptic. But for the most part his phrases are everywhere quite laconic, and the very honey-cells of Christian thought. It is this group of

letters that makes Paul one of the tall and sun-crowned of the world's men.

VI.

Robert Norwood, in his splendid book *The Heresy of Antioch*, thinks of the letters of Paul as the "stronghold of Protestantism." He calls them the foremost documents of free and spiritual Christianity, independent of tradition and death-dealing precedent. There is in them a golden note of universality and of brotherhood that makes its appeal everywhere and every when. From end to end they are alive with the spirit of "the little brother of all the world."

Dr. Norwood further points out that Paul's letters were lost sight of in the centuries of Christian ecclesiasticism, but that they came into their own again in Luther and the Reformation. Our day is pre-eminently the day of Paul and the Pauline Scriptures. Is it too much to say that Paul (following Christ) was the pioneer Protestant, standing for the right of each soul to follow and interpret Christ in terms of personal and inward experience? I think not. The tolerance, the breadth, the sanity of his writings mark them as the priceless documents of Christianity's charter of independence.

Paul talks arrestingly; what persuasive power in his words! Though most of them, as we have them, were personally penned or dictated in written form, yet they have the thrust and urgency of the spoken word. His speech is flecked with philippics against subtle and insidious evils and fragrant with a delicious hope. None of his comments on life are grim and laconic; rather they are laconic and glad.

It is not hard to envision Paul standing in synagogue or street pouring out his speech in the eager rush and fiery eloquence as he unburdens himself of the message Christ has called him to preach. Running all through the Roman and Corinthian epistles is a series of short staccato questions, the answers to which are models of succinctness and

brevity. Many of them are followed by the familiar "God forbid." He made skilful use of the most effective method of popular hortatory address—a universally accredited method of arousing interest.

VII

The foregoing explains why Paul is today one of the most alive of ancient teachers. With great clarity of view-point, audacity of thought, trenchancy of style and unfailing directness of purpose, he explores the human spirit. There is nothing in him of the meaningless jargon which fills the teaching of the founders of other faiths—Gautama, for example. He never stales his theme. His words are possessed of a beauty which is vigour's own.

Earnestness may not often flourish in the vicinity of brilliance, but Paul was both earnest and brilliant; the two were perfectly wedded in him. Strength and durability are the result. The milk-and-cinnamon manner of the weak had no place in him. He was expert in critical self-survey because so naïvely sincere. His independence of thought, derived doubtless from the Greek modernity (Hellenism) then prevalent, was buttressed by a sturdy moral fibre gained from his Hebrew upbringing. He possesses an originative depth of meditation which renders him compelling—which is full proof of the ample margin for thought which he commanded between his killing labours.

Perhaps no small part of the secret of Paul's power to impress us lies in his use of pictorial language. Of course the supreme master of pictorial speech was Jesus, who thought in pictures more than in concepts. In a less degree this is also true of Paul. "You strain at a gnat and swallow a camel," is a good example of the pictorial language of Jesus. It is a highly coloured exaggeration, but how much more effective than if He had said as we would have, "You are very careful about some little things and careless about some important things!" Says Dr. Briggs: "The extravagance of Hebrew figures of speech transgresses all classical

rules of style, heaping up and mixing metaphors, presenting the theme in such a variety of images and with such exceeding richness of colouring, that the Western critic is perplexed, confused and bewildered in striving to harmonize them into a consistent whole." And Paul, the most Hellenized of all great Jews, was no exception to this. If his metaphors are not so telling as those of Jesus, yet they possess an insouciant grace characteristic of a master. They possess a sweetness and tang, contain unexpected mental sallies which shake down walls of mental sluggishness, and are not free from "somersaults of paradox." There is a lofty extravagance at times which tries to express the inexpressible, but which now and then breaks under the stress of truth which it cannot wholly express. But who does not like these bejewelled figures, for they are as rich and fresh to the mind as clotted cream is to the taste.

Though the translation of Paul's words from the crisp and limpid Greek of the common speech which he used has lost them much of their light and heat—yet, still they are "quick and powerful." Though somewhat staled by ages of quotation—the best writing of the Christian thinkers of the centuries are flecked with gems from his pen—still they pulsate with that impassioned personality which was Paul's.

If in many ways Paul is our brother, in others he towers above us, not only because of his saintliness, but because of his immense genius. The demon that possesses the writer and the inspired worker tore him ceaselessly, giving him no rest. His was a tongue and a pen at the service of God, and speak and write he must to the very end.

The secret of his greatness, both as a writer and a thinker, is that he lived what he thought and felt what he said. As I have said, his style is not always uniform. Sometimes his thought advances by means of a succession of disconnected explosions; now it is pathetic and soulful like romantic prose; now flowing in solemn periods, sonorous and incisive, as for instance, some of the chapters in Romans; now like Tertullian or Carlyle it is drastic and impetuous. He is the

mystic striving to express the inexpressible; he thinks the unthinkable and skirts on paradox. He is the eagle scaling the heights of heaven on the pinions of contemplation. In him, abstractions and lyricism, logic and charity, dominate in turn, producing not inner conflict, but wondrous harmony. He seems all heart, but does not lose himself in diffusive outpourings; is intuitive and impulsive, but never lacking in insight; he has intelligence capable of all understanding. His mind opens to us loopholes into the most impenetrable mysteries, and his loving and fiery heart still, after so many centuries, finds the way to the heart of man and causes it to beat in unison with his own. As Papini has said, his are "the most brilliant letters ever penned by man —the fifth Gospel, for the conquering of the Gentiles."

XIII

MAN OF THE AGES

I

BY the end of the Apostolic Age certain leading facts regarding the Church had been achieved—freedom for Gentile converts, class distinctions levelled, and the consequent great expansion of Christianity, also the transfer of the Christian centre from Palestine to Europe. At the beginning of the Apostolic Age, the Church was overwhelmingly Jewish; before its close, it was overwhelmingly Gentile, owing mainly to the influence of Paul. It seems altogether likely that, but for Paul, Christianity would have remained a Jewish sect. But goaded by a flame-like ideal, guided by a statesmanlike vision, as though aware of the fact that he did immortal deeds, he shaped the Church for world-wide adventure. It is a conviction necessary for supreme work. Paul had succeeded not only in reaching the unlettered masses with the Gospel of hope and uplift, but succeeded, as well, in lifting Christianity as a system of thought into prominence over Greek and Oriental systems of religion and philosophy. Christianity was Grecized, and there were gains and losses in that, but mostly gains; for, as Plummer says, “The Gospel continued to supply the plain man with a simple rule of life, and it began to supply the philosopher with inexhaustible material for thought.”¹ Through the genius of this man the faith of the far-flung people of Israel became articulate in Christianity, and Christianity, as nothing else, has in-

¹ *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, Article “Church,” Vol. I, p. 209.*

fluenced "pregnant centuries and sovereign countries," and holds the promise of persisting in some saving form to the end of time.

If Paul did not foresee that Christianity would conquer the Empire of Rome, of one thing he was persuaded: that Christianity, if it could be kept as pure and passionate in succeeding centuries as it had been in the first, was potent and powerful enough to do so. This was his dream. The dream was fulfilled. As for the human reasons for this triumph, not the least, as already noted, was the religious bankruptcy of the Empire. Other factors in its success were, its preaching of Christ, His life, His death and His resurrection. These were chief. Then its lofty monotheism, its doctrine of the forgiveness of sins, its promise of redemption, its hope of immortality, its love of all men, and its inward cohesion and unity. These in their combined effect were irresistible.

It is one of the signal glories of Paul that he saw that the deliverance which Greece and Rome sought for was in Christianity, and that he proceeded to apply it as the remedy for their ills. Were they seeking deliverance? Paul offered it to them in Christ and His Cross. Did they see in sacrifice the road to redemption? Paul cited Christ and His Cross as the supreme and saving sacrifice. Did they crave fellowship with the gods? Paul preached Jesus Christ by means of His Cross reconciling God and man. That Christianity was able to bring a satisfying and saving message to the widespread sorrow of the ancient world was due in great measure to the religious genius of Paul.

From the first Paul had sensed the deliverance ability in the religion of Jesus. Had he not himself experienced a great deliverance? He committed the Church to a deliverance programme, and by preaching Christ as the great Deliverer, made Christianity supremely a deliverance religion. That the Mystery Religions embodied the Roman world's longing for deliverance and gave Christianity its supreme opportunity to prove itself a deliverance faith, we have

already noted.² Paul fitted Christianity to make conquest of the Roman world, but he did not do it by substituting Jesus Christ for Attis, Osiris, or Mithras; rather he did it by bringing everything, not incompatible with the Name of Christ, into subjection to Christ, by exalting Christ high over all. Some things of worth he doubtless drew from the Mystery Cults. That he shaped the appeal of the Gospel to meet the needs and hungers of the pagan world, which the Mysteries were trying to satisfy, seems indisputable. In these and other ways he proved himself a religious statesman and justifies the contention that he was the second founder of Christianity.

Paganism, it has been said, was a world-accepting religion; it was the love of the world and all its ways deified. But Christianity was a world-denying religion; it was strenuously opposed to the proud dominance of all things by "this world." Along this line the issue between paganism and Christianity was joined and the battle fought out. And it was Paul who had defined the terms and precipitated the struggle which in the end was to spell victory for the Church. For paganism, "this world" was bright and final; the hope beyond the grave was dim and colourless. The Christians (following Paul) had reversed all this. To them, it was this life which was vague and uncertain, and the life beyond the grave that was bright with promise. Paganism put all its emphasis upon the senses; Christianity upon spiritual values. We see in the New Testament the beginnings of the victory which was to be earned by Christianity's "sheer superiority" over all religious bidding for the allegiance of the Empire; and it was Paul's creative spirit and high thinking that had given it such superiority. Paul made Christianity un-national, and so made it non-conformist and international. It was this that brought down the persecutions of Rome upon the Church. But the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church. Paul was the bearer

² Chap. iii.

of a hope which has spread over the world and lives across the ages—achievement enough, destiny enough for any man.

II

“Paul the aged.” This is a phrase found in the middle of the one and only strictly private letter we have from the pen of Paul—the letter to Philemon. Here for the first time Paul writes himself down as an old man. He is writing about the year A.D. 63, and is fifty-five years old.³ That does not seem old to us, but Paul had never been robust. He was often visited with infirmity, and had undergone unparalleled hardships. Doubtless he had aged rapidly. His very extensive travels and his prison life had told on him. So as he writes from his Roman prison to a fellow-Christian at Colossæ, he is feeling old. “Paul the aged,” he says, with pathos but victory in his voice.

And yet—we know that the apostle lived and toiled on for three or four years longer. He was yet to write no less than seven of his shorter epistles—Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians, First Timothy, Titus, and Second Timothy. And if he was liberated for a time between this imprisonment and his final martyrdom, as is believed by many scholars—if, in other words, there was a second imprisonment at Rome, Paul put in still another arduous year of missionary work. Probably he carried out his well-known intention to visit Spain. He made a certain trip into the region of Troy and Macedonia which cannot be accounted for if he was not released for a time. The Church’s first great historian, Eusebius, writing in the fourth century, says, “There is a tradition that the apostle, after his defence, again set forth to the ministry of his preaching, and having entered Rome a second time was martyred.” Many of the Church fathers such as Jerome, Chrysostom, and Theodoret claim that Paul preached in Spain. Clement of

³ I accept A.D. 64 as the most probable date of Paul’s death.

Rome, who lived in the first century, says that Paul, having come to the limit of the West, suffered martyrdom.

This, together with the belief that he was released after the first Roman imprisonment, is as Paul expected. He wrote to the Philippians that he fully expected to visit them. He wrote to Philemon to prepare him a lodging, since he planned soon to visit him. Something happened, we know not what, to give Paul this assurance that he would be set free.

He is a prisoner again, bound by a galling chain linked to a soldier. At last the soaring eagle is captured; those great wings are taken in a net. But is he really captured? His body might be low in the greasy stocks, but his mind is more than ever the eagle's—companioning with the sun, soaring and golden. He still has youth's adventure, youth's vision, and youth's staggering capacity for achievement.

Youth is the period in which we really live. But for Paul age was not the burnt-out ashes of what was once a flame. When an old man, he sets for himself tasks which would exhaust the will and mental energies of a man half his age. This "Paul the aged" could still give the youngest of apostles lessons in audacity of act and modernity of opinion little short of amazing for one of his years and health. To the end he carried the laurel for enthusiasm, hence he obtained and wore the crown of accomplishment.

III

Paul the dauntless staggers to his knees in death; his body begins to be over-ripe; the ocean called "obligion"—but wrongly so in his case and that of every creative, self-giving man's—is rolling its waves toward him. The thunder of its surfs will soon engulf him. But it can neither obliterate nor disturb him. He is intent on Christ, whose victorious truths, like the squadrons of eternity, he sees marching through the mist of things as they are to the sunnier order that is to be. He is slipping out of the ranks, but the Church is in the grip of a master passion—to win the world

for Christ. Turmoil is over. Terror enmeshes him not at all. There is none. Christ has dispelled the blackness of the valley of death. Light is everywhere. He has helped make Christ supreme. He has channelled a road for Character. Beauty and truth and God now have a better chance at man. The road which began in blackness, then changed to crimson, has shaded off into the way all golden—and a white flower blossoms there.

The last chapter of the last letter he wrote, the second letter to Timothy, gives us a picture of Paul preparing for death. Here are some fine last touches of the great man. Winter is coming on, and feeling the frost in his bones, he wants his overcoat and certain prized books and manuscripts: "*The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.*"⁴ So Timothy is appraised of the fact that Paul hears the beating of the wings of Thanatos; he hastens to beat him and finish his letter. He is lonely as well as old, "Only Luke is with me"—Luke, his physician, his brother and travelling companion, his Boswell. Whatever, with good reason, he may once have held against the unstable John Mark, he holds nothing now: "Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for ministering." Above all, he begs Timothy to hurry to him. When finally he gets out, he goes singing a valediction of victory; he shouts in the very teeth of the last enemy,

"Death, where is thy sting?
Grave, where thy victory?"⁵

"*I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day.*"⁶ His sun

⁴ II Tim. 4:13.

⁵ I Cor. 15:55.

⁶ II Tim. 4:6-8.

had risen in the mysterious chambers of the dreaming east; it sets in the rosy, restless west.

IV

It need hardly be said now that we have been dealing with an exceptional man; a man who of all the followers of Jesus through the centuries was by far the most formative; a man who was the maker of an epoch; a man who has been studied, appreciated, and revered by millions; a man who belonged to the Græco-Roman world, but whose background was Semitic, thus equipping him as few have been equipped to interpret Christ to the heart of the whole world. Paul, knight of the Cross, was also the first Christian knight of the pen, and by it paved the way for a new order.

Some great teachers belong to their particular time. Beyond that they do not reach. Others, like John the Baptist, belong solely to periods of transition; they are links which connect the chain of the past to the chain of the future, bridges that lead from what has been to what will be. Paul, like Jesus before him, belonged to a new era, summed up, in fact, and in his own person enshrined a new order. Without knowing it, he was himself the living prophecy of a greater, wider, better time to come. He was standing at the breaking point between the ages, at the crossing of the line dividing that which was old and outworn from that which was new and inevitable. Judaism had to reach its peak and go down the other side of time's hill. The day of Christianity has come and *the Man from Tarsus* is its undisputed hero and herald. In his day, though he knew it not, thousands of potential apostles, Christian statesmen, teachers, and confessors stirred uneasily in the misty caverns of the future.

The Man of Tarsus has taken his place as one of the world's greatest thinkers, humanitarians, and judged by the endurance of his teaching, one of the two or three greatest religious teachers of mankind; a man who left the race the heritage of a life sacrificially and supremely lived with sim-

plicity, unparalleled achievement, and genuine service for all time to come. Paul emptied his life into the life of the ages.

The fact that Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire was not simply water that ran from Paul's mill; it was milk spilled from Paul's pail. He had it in germ. Not that the ecclesiastical system which became the Roman Catholic Church was implicit in his teaching; very much was lost and very much added before that was reached, but that Paul nursed a vision of a Christian empire our study has shown beyond question. And that he did is a thing to his lasting glory. Yet—he was a man of ends more than a man of means. He did not confine himself to giving merely an outward veneer or contour to the life of his day; rather he sought to influence and alter the very depths of its spirit. It was a spiritual and no temporal empire for which he panted.

At Paul's conversion in 35 Christianity was a Jewish sect. At his death in 64 it was a world-religion. He took the teaching of Jesus and put it into the language and life of the wide world. He took Christ from Nazareth and Jerusalem into the great cities of the empire. He led the Christian religion far toward the day when it was officially recognized as the religion of the Roman world. This he did by universalizing and spiritualizing Jesus. He preached the Son of God who lives not in Palestine, but in the souls of men everywhere.

From a humble beginning in Galilee the influence of Jesus Christ has been extended through sixty generations of unbroken continuity throughout the inhabited world. Christ's is today, indeed, "the name which is above every name;" and Paul's is next. Jesus outranks all other heroes and saviours of the race; and to Paul, more than to any other, belongs the chief credit for His supremacy.

Paul. Powerful preacher, skilful teacher, perfect scholar, ecstatic saint in virginity! There was none in the Church great enough to be his rival. He was the supreme leader by

right of superior qualities of both head and heart. And it is so still. He is the possession of the ages. The river of Time has been powerless to drown his fire; and, as Ben Jonson wrote of the greatest English man of letters, so may it be written of the greatest of Christian apostles:

“He was not of an age, but for all time.”

St. Paul is one of those for whom death does not exist. His bones lie somewhere in Europe, presumably at Rome, but his spirit enjoys the double privilege of dwelling in heaven in the light of God's countenance and of remaining upon earth to shed light on our path. This being, who, without doubt, was the most brightly shining light of the Church of the first century, who spent thirty years shepherding a whole company of troublesome and vulgar flocks scattered from Jerusalem to Rome (out of fifty centres of early Christianity in the Mediterranean world, thirty were established by Paul), who loved him, but were incapable of understanding him.—This was his first life. His second life in the souls of Christians and in the Church is not yet ended, nor will it ever end.

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